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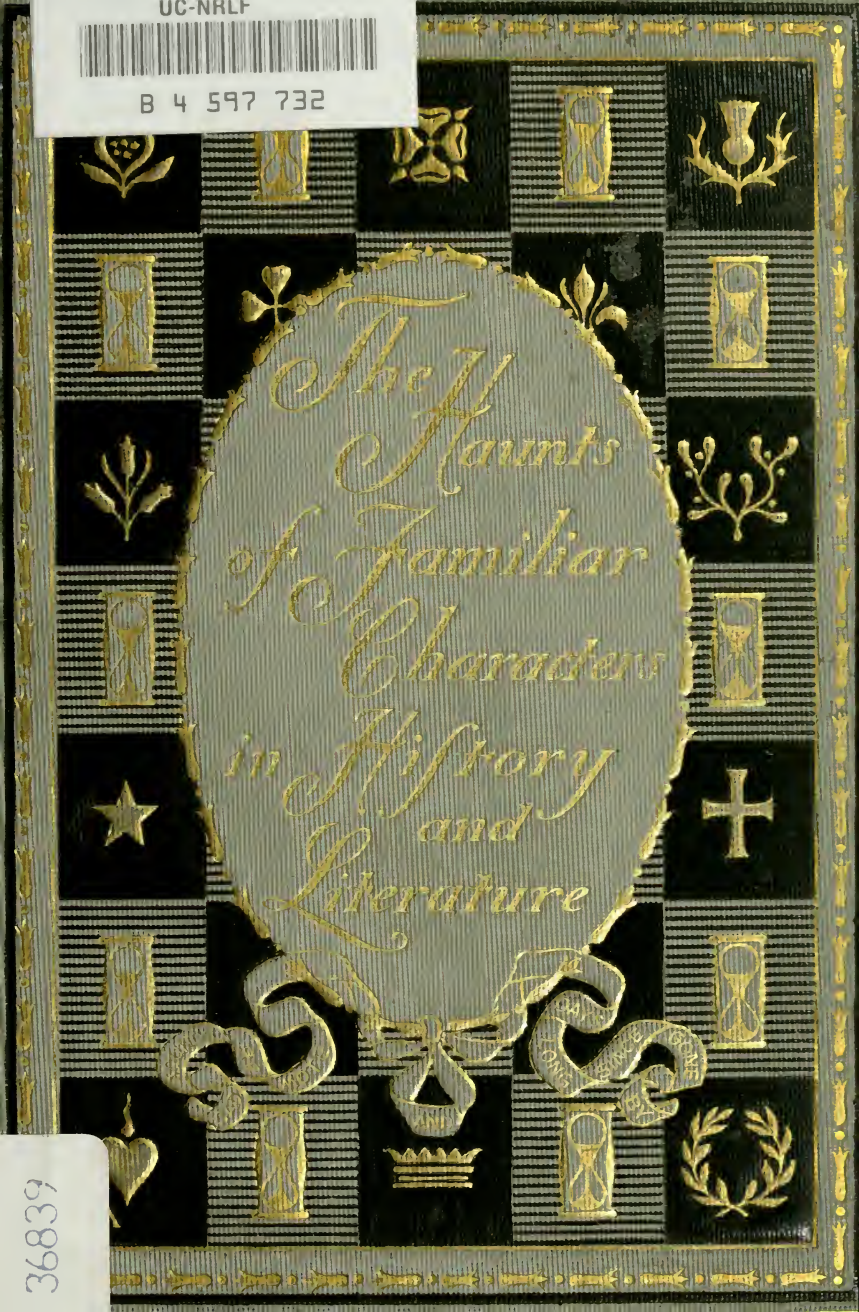

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To

MY THREE BOYS

WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP MADE A GOLDEN SUMMER OF MY LATEST TRANSATLANTIC VACATION

MARION HARLAND

New York City,
January, 1910

PN164
T52

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From the painting by Michael Dahl. *Frontispiece*

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I

"LITTLE BOY BLUE"

I

"LITTLE BOY BLUE"

AMERICAN readers of British classics recall Pope's satires more readily than his serious works in strolling in the grounds surrounding the ambitious structure reared on the site of his beloved villa at Twickenham. For many years after the crooked body of the poet was laid under the pavement of the old parish church, villa and grotto were famous show-places to cockney and to tourist.

We, a little band of "passionate pilgrims," have other and more interesting matter in hand on the perfect July day we have chosen for our visit to the beautiful suburb of the mighty city eleven miles away.

With indifferent success we have tried to identify the location of the manor-house held in crown-lease from Catharine of Braganza, Queen of Charles II., by an aged gentlewoman, Mrs. Davies by name. It was opposite the church, we knew, and that there were sixteen acres of land attached to it. Mrs. Davies had turned fields into orchards. Long lines of cherry-trees were in full bearing and glowing with ripe fruit in the early summer of 1695 when Princess Anne of Denmark chose Twickenham as the retreat in which her only living child—a boy in his sixth year—might be safe from the infection of small-pox. His aunt, Queen Mary, had died of that malady in her palace of Kensington late in the preceding year, and the disease continued to be epidemic in London.

That we may appreciate the supreme importance of the object that drove the anxious mother from her home, it is necessary to review certain historical details.

LLANGOLLEN PARISH CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD SHOWING
THE TOMB OF THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN

From a photograph by Valentine

James II. of England had been deposed by his son-in-law, William of Orange, and his wife, who was James's eldest daughter. The unhappy King had taken with him into exile his son by his second wife, then a mere baby less than a year old. This child was seven years of age in 1695. In the struggle for the throne which followed his father's death, he was known to the Jacobites as "James III." The Protestant adherents of William and Mary banned him as "The Pretender." This is not the place for a discussion of the rights and wrongs of the English succession. Our story has to do with the fragile boy, who, as the child of the Princess Anne, would, in the course of time, ascend the throne now occupied by his uncle-in-law—provided the little lad should live to man's estate.

The eyes of the civilised world were bent upon these two infant scions of royalty. Queen Mary had just died without issue. Her husband and co-sovereign, weakened by remorseful grief

for her loss and by chronic disease, was, once and again, reported to be fatally ill. Across the Channel, the French Court and King that sheltered the exiles were watching the game in which the crown of England was the prize, with eagerness hardly second to that felt by the Jacobite party at home and abroad.

Reading of the life and times of "Good Queen Anne," in the colourless glare of impartial history, we have come to smile at the title bestowed upon her by the common people, whom she ever befriended. Her slavery to her vulgar and haughty favourite, Sarah Churchill, whom she made Duchess of Marlborough; her ill-spelled and ungrammatical letters; her bungling attempts at diplomacy, and divers other weaknesses and foibles—all absurdly unqueenly—blind us to the truth that as a wife and mother she was exemplary to heroism. She bore many children—some say nineteen, and saw them, one by one, die in early infancy—some before they could be baptised.

On July 24, 1689, the bulletin was issued that "Her Royal Highness and the young prince are very well, to the great satisfaction of their Majesties [William and Mary] and the joy of the whole court, as it will doubtless be of the whole kingdom."

Elsewhere we read: "The infant was baptised 'William' in Hampton Court chapel. The King and Queen stood sponsors. They proclaimed him Duke of Gloucester the same day, and were generally understood to regard him as their adopted son."

Our band of pilgrims picked up in London a reprint of a "Tract," the original of which is in the British Museum, being the *Memoirs of the Duke of Gloucester* written by one Lewis Jenkins, the Welsh "usher" of the most valuable baby in Christendom. Through this ancient chronicle we have made acquaintance with our small hero, than whom there is no more pathetic childish figure in all history, if we except that

of the little Dauphin who may—or may not—have died in the prison from which his mother was led to the guillotine.

From Lewis Jenkins we learned how, when the child—weak and puny from birth, although proclaimed "well and likely to live"—was four years old, he could not walk alone.

"His head," reports Jenkins, "was extremely long and large, which made him very difficult to be fitted with a peruke." In most respects tractable, he yet refused obstinately to go up and down stairs unless he were led by two attendants, one on each side. This would never do in a prince of the blood! With tidings of the beauty and health of the six-year-old Pretender ringing in the ears of the English nation, and the certainty that spies in the very household of William and Mary would exaggerate stories of the infirmity of the heir apparent, Prince George and his consort resolved upon heroic measures. Tender-hearted Anne reasoned with her son in

private for an hour upon the disgrace of a great boy of five being led about like a baby. Finally "she conducted him to the middle of the room and told him to walk, as she was sure he could do."

The "great boy" stood stock-still.

"The Princess then took a birch rod and gave it to Prince George, who repeatedly slashed his son with it, in vain. At last, by dint of severe strokes, the torture made him run alone."

We are informed that the experiment was successful.

"Ever afterward he walked up and down stairs without requiring aid."

This lesson is the first stage (of which we hear) in the hardening process his royal godparents and his natural guardians planned and carried out as the basis of the education of one who was in training for kingly state and deeds.

We are at no loss in diagnosing the case laid before us in the few sentences I have transcribed. The enormous head, and the giddiness which made the baby

fear to descend the stairs, point so plainly to what was even then known as "water on the brain," that fearless Dr. Radcliffe, to whom the health of the young prince was entrusted, should have interfered with a blunt statement of the truth to avert the torture inflicted by the conscientious father.

A year later we have gratifying indications that the boy had, as we would say, "grown up to his head." Needless to say, he was in danger of being spoiled by the whole Court. The Queen visited him daily. Saturnine William, always embittered by the thought of his own childless estate, amused himself, nevertheless,with the pranks and droll sayings of his prospective successor. Jenkins has an anecdote of a visit made by his Majesty to the nursery, which, by order of Prince George, was furnished with military toys alone. The boy had a company of soldiers of his own age, and was conversant with the forms and technical terms of war-making. He now drew up his

men to receive the King, and saluted him in true martial style.

"Have you no horses?" the King asked presently.

"One live and two dead ones," was the answer.

He meant the Shetland pony, "no bigger than a mastiff," on which he rode in the park, and two wooden horses.

"Real soldiers bury dead horses out of sight!" the King informed his nephew, with a laugh the boy construed into a sneer.

No sooner was William's back turned than his namesake ordered a detachment of his soldiery to "bury the dead horses." Henceforward, he would have none such about him.

The boy-regiment attended their commander wherever he went. During one of his frequent illnesses, tattoos were sounded by the drum corps in his chamber, and from his feverish pillow he directed the erection of miniature fortifications, on and about his bed. A luckless

courtier, thinking to amuse the convalescent by the gift of an automatic toy, was haled to the bedside by the order of the Duke, who considered his dignity insulted by the implication that he had not outgrown "the toy age," and drenched to the skin with water from squirts manned by the diminutive warriors.

The Princess, as solicitous for her son's manners and morals as for his health of body, yet seems not to have foreseen what would be the influence upon speech and demeanour of association with rude inferiors, until he shocked her by a bit of camp, or stable slang, uttered in the presence of a stately duchess who was calling upon the mother. Upon inquiry, Anne was told that he caught the phrase from "hearing his soldiers becall one another." On another occasion she was horrified when he "vowed" that he was "confounded dry."

Jenkins records with grateful satisfaction that his little master lied out of the predicament into which he was thrown

by the incautious admission that he had heard "Lewis" say the naughty words.

"Then Lewis Jenkins shall be turned out of waiting!" decided the Princess.

"Oh no, Mamma!" said the child. "Now I think of it, it was myself who did invent that word."

The mother had more lasting cause for distress when her son turned a deaf and disdainful ear to the teachings of his chaplain and a tutor clergyman whose sole office was to inculcate religion in the tender mind. Prayers were duly said in his apartment night and morning, but he busied or amused himself with more attractive matters while they went on.

In short, we may read plainly, between Lewis's complacent entries, that his royal charge was on the high-road to as pronounced a type of swashbucklerism as father or uncle could desire, when his royal aunt died of small-pox. Anne—mindful of her darling's safety in the depth

of grief made poignant by the memory of the estrangement that had, of late years, grown up between sisters who had once loved one another dearly—hurried her household away from the vicinity of the infected palace, and, as the warmer weather drew on, took her son, by Dr. Radcliffe's advice, to Twickenham.

She occupied there a furnished house adjoining the residence of Mrs. Davies, with the expressed privilege of "gathering all the cherries needed for the use of the Queen's household, provided the trees were not injured."

The young duke was accompanied by his Lilliputian soldiery, and exercised them on a common near the church. There is no common there now, and the sixteen-acre orchard, blushing in that merry June time with ripe fruit, is built up with modern houses. The old manor-house of the benign gentlewoman, to whose heart the royal boy soon made his way, is no longer recognisable, even in outline. Yet we reproduce the scene

to our own satisfaction by the help of honest Lewis and his *Memoirs*.

The hostess (for she refused Anne's proffer of a hundred guineas per month for the furnished lodgings) was over eighty years of age. Her habits of life were simple to abstemiousness, and she devoted her days to prayer and good works. She never did a better work than when she took the princely infant upon her knees and told him stories such as he had never heard from other lips. From her dictation he learned the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and what they mean.

From these exercises they passed to other petitions and formulas enjoined by the church, to all of which the child lent reverent heed.

The singular intimacy appears to have gone on without exciting the mother's interest until he amazed her and his lady-governess by proposing, one Sunday morning, to go with them to Twickenham church.

"My Lady Fitz-Harding—as witty and pleasant a lady as any in England"—so Jenkins goes out of his way to tell us—could not resist the temptation to twit the boy with his former irreligious behaviour.

She reminded him how he had hated the Psalms when his tutor would have him recite them, and doubted if he would join in that part of public worship.

"I will sing them!" promised he, simply and solemnly, and he kept his word

He attended divine services regularly thereafter, and never, so long as he lived, failed to pray, night and morning, in the words he had learned from his agéd friend. Lewis adds, with never a touch of humour, that the Duke still continued disdainfully indifferent to the perfunctory prayers read in his apartment by preceptor and priest.

The incident is so beautiful, the suggestions it inspires are so many and so touching, that we gird at the necessity of

passing on to the next chapter of the chronicle.

Our worthy Welshman had troubles of his own ere long, arising out of what the "witty and pleasant lady-governess" averred was officiousness in his behaviour to his youthful lord.

"You pretend to give the Duke notions of mathematics—and stuff!" she flung at him.

"I only tell him stories from history to divert him, and assist him in his plays!" was the humble defence.

The well-meaning fellow was forthwith made to comprehend that the trend of a princeling's education was along severer lines. Learning was not to be a flowery path for his feet. He was making ready for a crown, the wearing of which meant wars and fightings to the death. There is abundant proof that he threw himself with ardour into the study of the soldier's trade. One of the pleasing anecdotes of his residence at Twickenham tells of the adroitness with which he parried

his mother's reproof when she found him in the act of challenging some of his soldiers to a fencing-match:

"I thought I had forbidden your people to fence with you!" said she, sternly.

"I hope, Mamma, that you will give them leave to defend themselves when I attack them," was the ready response.

After that rest-summer he was drilled strictly in "fortification, geometry, and other sciences according to the regular methods."

The sum of fifty thousand pounds was appropriated for his education, according to these regular methods. Bishop Burnet was appointed to the high office of tutor to the future King, and the rising Duke of Marlborough was made his "governor." King William summed up his ambitions for his adopted son in one pregnant sentence:

"My Lord of Marlborough, make the Duke of Gloucester like yourself, and I can desire no more."

One of our listening party broke in upon the narrative at this point:

"Like John Churchill! Thank God the boy died!"

He learned rapidly in the school for which each of his few years had been preparatory. When hurt in a mock battle, he made no outcry, and, the combat over, asked that a surgeon be summoned in so calm a tone that his comrades imagined the order to be part of the play.

"Pray make no jest of it!" returned the Duke, gravely. "Peter Bathurst has really wounded me."

The sheath had slipped from young Bathurst's sword and the point had run into the Duke's neck. The cut bled freely, but the spirited boy concealed it until the fight was finished.

At another time he cut his cheek in a fall, striking against his pistol as he went down. On his return home the women about his mother made great outcry at sight of the blood.

"A bullet grazed my forehead," he

explained, magniloquently. "As a soldier, I could not cry out when I was wounded."

He was but six years old when he was invested with the Order of the Garter, comporting himself, writes a witness of the ceremonial, "as if he had been six-and-thirty."

Four days thereafter, Prince George of Denmark and his wife celebrated their wedding anniversary. Their son now resided at Windsor, as befitted the acknowledged heir to the throne. His parents called upon him early in the forenoon, and were saluted by the firing of a beautiful little cannon, the gift of Prince Rupert. After three rounds from the piece, the boy made an impromptu address to the wedded pair:

"Papa! I wish you and Mamma unity, peace, and concord, not for a time, but for ever."

"I told him," says admiring Lewis Jenkins—who seized the first chance for slipping in a confidential morsel of flat-

tery—"that it 'was a fine compliment you made to their Royal Highnesses to-day.' The answer was uttered as readily as the address had been spoken: 'Lewis! it was no compliment. It was sincere.'"

We are quite prepared by the scene and speech for the faithful toady's next comment:

"He, now, though he had not completed his seventh year, began to be more wary in what he said, and would not talk and chatter just what came into his head, but, now and then, would utter shrewd expressions with some archness."

Sprightliness and spontaneity were stiffening in the mould adjusted to his true nature by his royal relatives, in concert with pompous Burnet and pragmatical John Churchill, the last-named acting under his master's orders to make of the boy one like unto himself.

A third and a more gorgeous fête followed fast upon the wedding anniversary. Anne Stuart never knew a prouder

hour—great and good sovereign as she was afterward reckoned to be—than was hers on her birthday in 1697, when, at the King's behest, her son, "the parliamentary heir, was to be introduced to the court with the utmost magnificence."

In the exultation of maternal pride and gratified ambition, she designed and had made for him the costume in which he appeared that day.

We had seen the picture before the excursion to Twickenham. To confess the truth, it was the sight of it that inspired us with the desire to search for the home of good Mrs. Davies. The suit is of azure velvet, the colour of the Order of the Garter. We are told that the buttonholes were incrusted with tiny diamonds, and that the buttons were sapphires. One forgets the unchildlike attire in surveying the face of the wonderful boy. His features are irregular; the complexion is fair; the large eyes are dark blue. The head—no longer too

large for the slender neck—is nobly formed.

The attitude of easy grace is that of the courtier, rather than of a precocious child. Beauty of form and feature are forgotten as one gazes into the eyes, and the expression of the face steals into the soul. It is not alone that the weird wistfulness—so often seen in the eyes of those who are to die early that the meaning of it has passed into a proverbial superstition—lies deep in the blue eyes now fixed upon us. Every lineament is thoughtful and significant. The royal lad knows what we do not. The wistful gaze is full of dignified reticence that does not belong to his years.

We turned us from the study with heartache that remains with us and sharpens as we read and dream of the pitiful tale, in the shadow of the church that holds a poet's ashes. It stands upon the foundation of that in which the fair princeling repeated the sacred words learned from the loving saint who lived

over there. We long to know just where! Her home should be a shrine.

We hurry over the record of the Duke's ninth birthday celebration, the court ball, the compliments interchanged, the banquet and the inevitable display of fireworks. The boy's education was pushed forward with zeal and despatch by Burnet & Co. Other sons and daughters were born to his parents, and died at birth, or shortly afterward. The declining health of the King riveted public interest on both sides of the Channel upon the lad who was to make firm the Stuart rights in England, without endangering the existence of the established church.

At ten years of age he passed triumphantly an examination upon "the Gothic laws, Jurisprudence, the Feudal System and the Higher Branches of Mathematics, together with Military Engineering"! The four pundits appointed by the Government to conduct the torture were loud in amazed eulogy of the pupil's proficiency.

On the eleventh anniversary of his birth he was allowed to make public demonstration of his knowledge of military tactics. There was a grand parade of his boy-regiment; a general jubilation over the display followed, and (of necessity) fireworks. The day wound up with a great supper at which the hero of the day was the principal figure. He went to bed tired out, and awoke next day with fever and sore throat. Dr. Radcliffe had quarreled with Princess Anne a while before, and refused, like the bear he was,—to come to Windsor when a message was sent that the Duke was ill. A resident physician bled the royal patient, not knowing what else to do. "When in doubt, draw blood!" was the unwritten rule of the profession at that day. The fever did not abate, and an imperative express was despatched for Dr. Radcliffe. Not daring to disregard the royal command, he presented himself in the sick-room.

"Scarlet fever!" he pronounced. "Who bled him?"

"I did!" said the physician in attendance.

"You have killed him! You may finish the work. I refuse to prescribe."

The Duke of Marlborough was hastily summoned. We wonder why? The conqueror of Blenheim was a broken reed in the chamber where the hope of Protestant England lay a-dying.

He had his release from bishop and from governor, from cruel tasks and state intrigues, on the thirtieth of July, 1700, five days after the birthday ball.

The reader pockets the old chronicle. The churchyard is very still. Twickenham is not a noisy suburb.

"A death that may have changed the destiny of America, too!" remarks one thoughtfully. "For, had he lived, there would have been no Hanoverian dynasty."

We wander from political speculations back to our "Story of a Short Life." We are thankful for the calm blessedness of the boy's sojourn in the

old manor-house when the cherries were ripe. The happiest days he was to know on earth! The one summer in which he could be a child, in deed and in truth. It was to us as if he had died when he kissed Mrs. Davies "good-bye."

"Little Boy Blue!" murmurs one, infinite pity and tender yearning in eyes and tone.

They took toys that delight other babies away from him. Yet the words of a song that has heart-break in every line haunt us all the way back to town:

Aye! faithful to little Boy Blue they stand,
  Still in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a baby hand,
  The smile on a baby face.
And they wonder, waiting the long years through,
  In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue,
  Since he kissed them and put them there.

II

THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN

II

THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN

IN a locked drawer of my library is an old manuscript book bound in soft calfskin, the hall-mark of the "*Edition de Luxe*" of the eighteenth century. The pages, sallowed by the century-and-a-quarter that have made them tender to the touch, are covered with characters, small, but as clear as copperplate and distinct, although faded to a leaf-brown. One hundred and fifty letters, carefully numbered, were here transcribed by the man who wrote the originals to a woman whom he knew from her girlhood. He married her sister. Through the stilted platonics of the numbered epistles, it is plain to this one of his correspondent's descendants that he should have wedded the younger of the two girls.

Why he did not has nothing to do with the story I have in hand to-day. The title of the manuscript volume has been in my thoughts since I entered the doors of a house more venerable than the copied letters.

"FRIENDSHIP PERPETUATED"

is stamped deep in gold letters upon the soft calfskin. The inscription was the man's device. After forty years of wedlock with the Other Sister, it is probable that he was honest in belief and intention. That was a sentimental age in which he lived with his lawfully-wedded wife on one side of the Atlantic, while The Ladies of Llangollen illustrated Friendship Perpetuated on the other.

Careful sifting of traditions and contemporary printed gossip enables us to get a tolerably correct outline of the circumstances which brought about an intimacy without precedent or parallel in feminine biography.

In 1769 or 1770, Sarah Ponsonby, a

THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN IN RIDING HABITS

From a photograph by Valentine

girl of seventeen, the daughter of an "Honourable," was placed at school in Kilkenny during the absence of her parents in Italy, whither they had gone for the mother's health. The Butlers of Garryicken, a fine old estate within easy calling distance of Kilkenny, were friends of the Ponsonbys, and Sarah was commended to the maternal oversight of Mrs. Butler. She spent Sundays and holidays at Garryicken, and fell violently in love with the eldest daughter of the house—Miss (afterward Lady) Eleanor Charlotte Butler, then thirty-three years of age. The attachment was reciprocated so ardently that the two resolved before the return of the travellers to devote their lives to one another, and, "forsaking all others, to cling to each other alone until death should part them." Even in the age when Laura Matilda and Lydia Languish set the pace for young women of fashion and sensibility, the absorbing devotion of the friends, in no wise chilled by the cold fact that their

birthdays were sixteen years apart, met with no sympathy from their relatives. So pronounced was Mrs. Butler's contemptuous opposition that the fond pair planned an elopement. Lady Betty Fownes, Lady Eleanor's aunt, invited them to her country seat of Woodstock, County Kilkenny, and they seized upon the opportunity of making their escape from tyrannical kinspeople. It is not likely that the house-door was locked, but the twain let themselves down, in true dramatic fashion, from an upper window. The descent was accomplished in safety; in the attempt to scale the park wall one of the fugitives—one account says Miss Ponsonby, another Miss Butler—fell and sprained her knee so severely that they were forced to return ignominiously.

The lovers were separated for several years, absence making both hearts grow fonder. Now and then, a note in Lady Eleanor's diary testifies to this — as, when she speaks of a brother of Miss Ponsonby, whom she has met casually,

as the "brother of the most perfect thing on earth."

Why they should have elected to run away from home and kindred when one was forty-odd, and the other twenty-two, and her own mistress, is enigmatical in a law-abiding age. That a second elopement was planned appears from a note in a private letter written by a member of the Butler clan to a friend:

"The runaways are caught! My mother has gone to Waterford for them, and we expect to see them here [Woodstock] to-night."

A postscript, added after the return, says, wonderingly, "They do not appear in the least ashamed of themselves!"

Finally, an entry in the diary of another kinswoman announces that "Eleanor and Miss Ponsonby set out in a chaise at early dawn, as merry as possible, taking with them one Mary Carryl, a well-known character in the neighbouring village of Mestioge."

This is our introduction to the faithful

follower who sleeps beside her mistresses in the old Llangollen churchyard after thirty years of devoted service. Her nickname in the village from which the ladies took her was "Molly the Bruiser." How she earned it we are not told. She accompanied them to what was then considered the wilds of North Wales. We have pitched our moving tent for a few days in the ancient hostelry that was their abiding-place while they cast about for a permanent home. "The Hand" (named from a tradition connecting it with a tragic incident in the history of Chirk Castle in the neighbourhood) had then, as it has now, an enviable reputation for good living and hospitality. In situation, it is unsurpassed for beauty and healthfulness.

Less than half a mile from the inn, in the very heart of the loveliest valley of picturesque Wales—walled in from the world the recluses had renounced for the *solitude à deux* for which they had pined for nearly a decade—stood a cottage of

MARY CARRYL

From a photograph by Valentine

modest proportions, surrounded by a few acres of arable land and backed by a wood. Mary Carryl must have husbanded her savings judiciously, for the purchase of cottage and grounds was made in her name, and for long she was their only servant.

Maria Edgeworth, English by birth, and Irish by residence and in heart, satirised the Ladies of Llangollen in her *Moral Tales*, published in 1801. Her story of "Angelina, or L'Amie Inconnue," is founded upon such rumours of the elopement as had reached her in Ireland. She followed the real story in making one of the enamoured pair much older than the girl she bewitched into quitting friends and setting conventionality at defiance, and in giving mountainous Wales as the goal of their flight. The moral of the Tale fails utterly when one compares Angelina's disappointment and penitent return to her guardians with the actual dénouement of the comedy, the first acts of which I have reviewed.

For awhile, the coveted *solitude à deux* would seem to have satisfied them. They had no neighbours of their own rank, and Wales was as little known to their former associates as Darkest Africa to the average twentieth-century fashionist.

One chronicler writes of the few years immediately succeeding the induction into "the cottage near a wood":

"For some years they led secluded lives, entirely wrapped up in each other. They created no sensation in the neighbourhood except by their kindness and charity. They were respected by the Welsh, and their characters were summed up with shrewdness by a Mrs. Morris in the following antithesis: 'I must say, sir, after all, they was very charitable and cantankerous. They did a deal of good, and never forgave an injury!'

"By degrees," pursues our chronicler, "as their retreat became known, they were drawn into correspondence with their Irish connections and friends. The

romance of their lives grew with time. Their long solitude was part of the romance, and when, later on, it was discovered that these two quiet ladies were, the one, a sister, and the other, a grandniece of two Earls, they awoke to find themselves famous."

Theirs was not an indolent seclusion. They remodelled the house and laid out the grounds in accordance with directions printed by celebrated landscape gardeners of a day when picturesque gardening was a fad with refined landowners.

"Although the farm had only thirteen acres of land, they employed a carpenter, a cowman, a man for all work on the farm; and, in the hay-harvest, an additional number of men and poor women, with two ladies' maids and three female servants in the house."

Lady Eleanor was "the man of the concern," to borrow an expressive Americanism. Her account-books are entertaining reading, and give us more correct

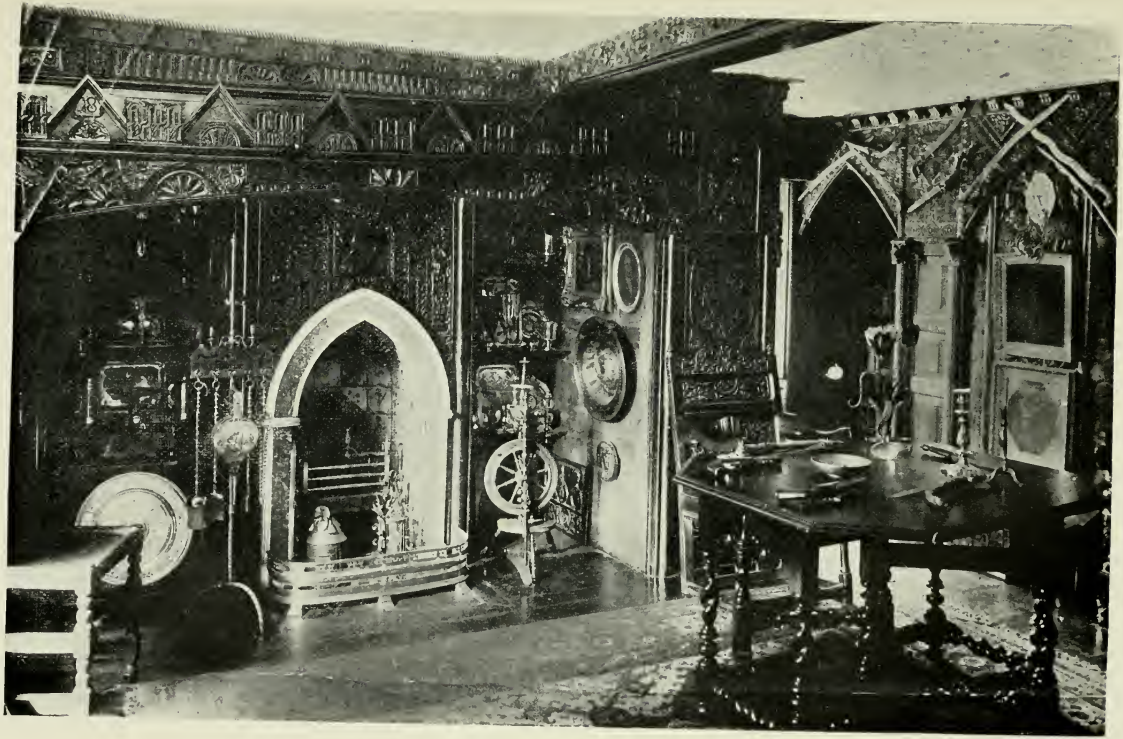
and clearer views of their daily living than any of the various narratives that have been printed of the Two Eccentrics. They are written in a minute, but legible, hand, and contain notes of all expenses incurred by the two, from the purchase of gowns, in which they were to attend balls, down to beer from "The Hand," condemned once as "very bad."

The noble book-keeper always refers to her younger mate as "My Beloved," or, for brevity's sake, as "My B.," which meant the same thing.

From a record belonging to the present proprietor of Plas Newydd (thus they named the cottage that grew into the mansion in which we are graciously permitted to stray and dream, on this perfect summer noon) I copy a page from the diary that has for me exquisite flavour. It lingers with one as the sweetness of clover-honey on the tongue. Yet it is simple to homeliness:

"*New Year's Day.*

"When all was in order, we admired



PLAS NEWYDD

From a photograph

the perfect neatness and regularity with which we had adjusted our little matters; all the account-books and journals in one large drawer; letters from friends, poems, essays, and odd things in another, and our answers in a third. In one press, four large bundles of newspapers; waste paper with twine for packing; old almanacs, plays and poems in another press. The few medicines we are possessed of, for our poorer neighbours; powder, pomatum, elderflower water; orangeflower water; bottle of essence of violets; black and white paint and brushes for repeating labels in the garden; paste brush for mounting drawings, and gluepot.

"Then we sat in converse sweet, then read,—and thus closed this day of sweet and blessed retirement."

Friendship Perpetuated should not, perhaps, be so marvellous a thing in this world of ours, that we should query whether or not these women ever wearied of each other in the "blessed retirement."

In the half-century of their residence at Plas Newydd they never slept for one night under any roof except their own. Newspapers and private letters kept them advised of what was astir in the sphere from which they had voluntarily exiled themselves for all time. How lively was their interest in happenings in which they had no part, we learn from the reports of pilgrims to Friendship's Shrine. Among the throngs who paid their respects to the mistresses of the now beautiful "cottage," was Madame de Genlis, who frankly confesses that she was drawn thither by curiosity to see two women "who had long been united by the bonds of genuine friendship." She was accompanied in her visit by her pupil, Mademoiselle d'Orléans, and bore a letter of introduction from Lord Castlereagh.

"We were received"—she says, "with a grace a cordiality and kindness of which it would be impossible for me to give any idea. I could not turn my eyes from those two ladies, rendered so interesting

by their friendship, and so extraordinary on account of their way of life. . . . After living so many years in this sequestered retreat, they speak French with equal fluency and purity. An excellent library, composed of the best English, French, and Italian authors, affords them an inexhaustible source of diversified amusement and solid occupation."

She remarks upon Miss Ponsonby's skill with pencil and brush, and Lady Eleanor's proficiency in music, and points out, as a matter of congratulation, that "so much merit is secured in this peaceful retreat from the shafts of satire and envy."

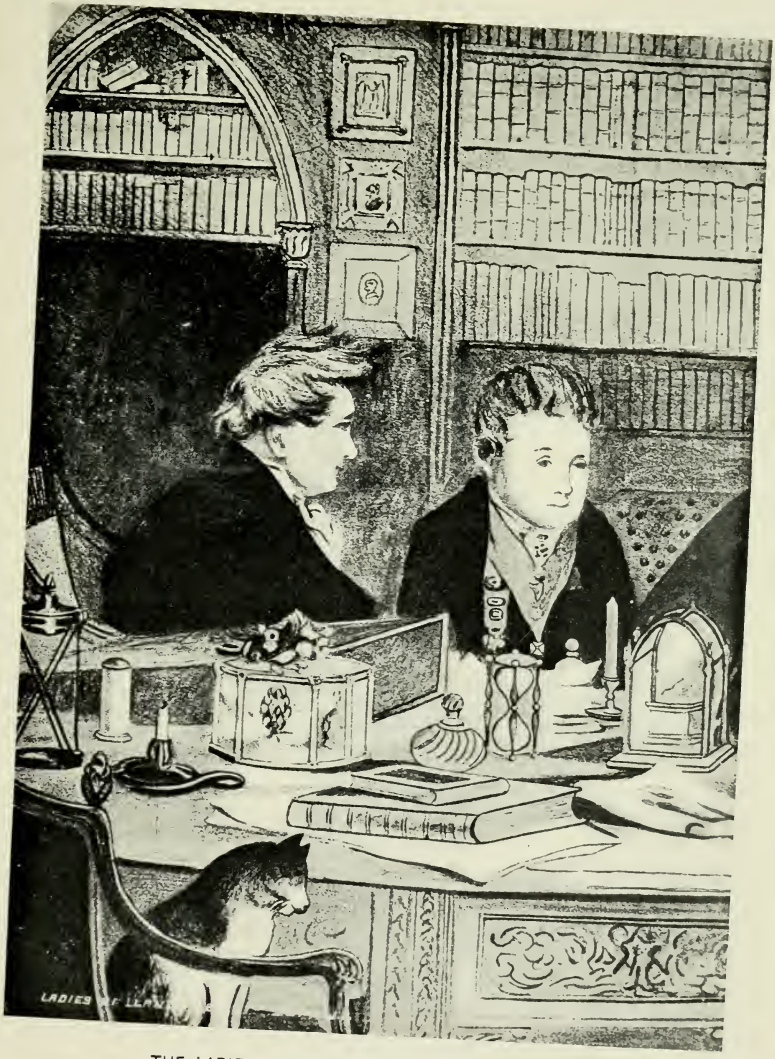
"I was much struck with the little resemblance between them. Lady Eleanor has a charming face, embellished with the glow of health. Her whole appearance and manner announce vivacity and the most unaffected gaiety. Miss Ponsonby has a fine countenance, but pale and melancholy . . . You might

suppose that she still cherishes some painful regrets."

If she did, we may be sure that the leading spirit of the household never suspected it.

Most of the pilgrims to Plas Newydd took up the same strain of panegyric. It is however amusing, if not edifying, to observe that "so much merit," joined to hospitality unfeigned, and personal gifts, were *not* an impervious shield against "the shafts of satire." Certain graceless wits and irreverent scribblers had their fling at what one of them patronisingly styles "the amiable Eccentrics of Llangollen." One of the least responsible and most flippant rattles on in this fashion:

"At Llangollen, our Irish grandees left us, stopping there to pay their respects to the two Ladies, their countrywomen, of whom everybody has heard, who came there professedly for retirement, yet whose cottage, situated on the roadside, is literally a house of call to all



THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN IN THEIR LIBRARY

From a photograph by Valentine

who travel to and from the dear country, as well as for all curious and impertinent pedestrian tourists, female novel writers, and maudlin poetesses."

Leaving us to guess in which category he puts himself by the outbreak that smacks suspiciously of personal pique, he comments upon the style of conversation introduced by the predatory horde into the placid refinement of the Retreat:

"These visitors talk of the parks and lodges of their fathers and uncles; the beauty of their mothers and aunts, and their alliance to half the peerage of the United Kingdom; of fighting duels in sawpits; of Curran's eloquence; of the Lake of Killarney; the Irish pipes; bog-wood; Dublin Bay herrings; the clearness of the Liffey and whiskey punch."

The list is like the skirl of bagpipes drowning the "wind-weird melody produced by the Æolian harp," placed in the window of Madame de Genlis. She calls the abode of the recluses "the delicious cottage of North Wales." Lady

Eleanor uses the same adjective in recounting the incidents of one of the excursions they were sometimes persuaded to make into comparatively gay life:

"After dinner, Miss Webb played divinely on the harpsichord and acted a scene in *Percy*" [Hannah More's popular drama] "then, in *Douglas* and *Jane Shore* so finely—such a voice, such gesticulation, a countenance so animated, so lovely, and every movement so graceful that every person in company burst into tears! At eleven we took leave. At half-past one, we arrived at our delicious abode."

The journal of another day is yet more amazing, when one considers that the elder of the pleasure-seekers was now nearer seventy than sixty years of age, and her "Beloved" over fifty. Lady Eleanor writes zestfully of the visit to the Bishop of St. Asaph's, the incumbent of the venerable see founded by a Father of the Church in 500 A.D.

"We arose at four A.M.; Holiday, the Chester hairdresser, dressed our Hair. Went in the 'Hand' chaise-and-four, and reached Ruthin at seven. Did not get out while the horses rested. Reached the Palace at half-past nine. Received at the hall-door by that most benevolent and reverend of prelates in his gown and black velvet nightcap, and Mrs. Shipley and her two sweet daughters who all exclaimed at our expedition. Breakfast ready; then to Cathedral. Very fine purple velvet and gold curtains. Arrived at home at two."

She should have been the artist, instead of gentle, pensive Sarah Ponsonby. There is not a meaningless stroke in her sketch. The bestirment of the orderly household at the peep of day; the solemn dressing of the two heads at the hands of the artist, kept in the house overnight that he might be punctual to the minute; the rumble of the hired chaise-and-four out of the court-yard, postilions in livery on the leaders; the halt at the relay

house, and the seclusion of the stately gentlewomen, in full dress and towering headpieces, behind the closed windows of the carriage while the horses were rubbed down and "rested"; the arrival, in the still sweetness of the young day, at the palace; the cordial welcome of the family, headed by the prelate in dressing-gown and nightcap, and the flattering admiration expressed of the courage displayed in the "expedition"; the touch of provincial wonder at the gorgeous trappings of the sanctuary—she gives it all to us in a few lines. We feel sure that the record was penned that same afternoon before the "delicious" thrills excited by the "lark" left pulse and nerves to their habitual tranquillity.

Molly the Bruiser had long ago been promoted to the dignity of housekeeper. She was "Mrs. Mary Carryl," and a power in the home. All the same, Lady Eleanor never relaxed her watchfulness of domestic incomings and outgoings. Her expense-books were kept as carefully

after legacies and inheritance increased modest means to wealth, as when the daily living of the household depended upon the pensions granted to her and her "Beloved," and Mary Carryl's economies made up what was lacking. Some of these entries throw light upon the quality of their associates that discounts the slurring summary quoted just now.

"Eels and Trouts for Mrs. Piozzi; Pair of Turkies—expectation of Miss Seward" (a then popular author); "Veal—expectation of Dean of Orrery," are jotted down, not far from mention of a visit from Lady Duncannon and her grandson, Arthur Wellesley—"a charming young man, handsome-fashioned, tall and elegant."

The acquaintance with the promising young man ripened into friendship. The Duke of Wellington was as freely at home at Plas Newydd as had been Arthur Wellesley. The richly carved mantel, to which I raise my eyes from

the faded entries in the Diary, was his gift after, he had conquered Napoleon. The orders kept under glass, in such a showcase as one sees in jewellers' shops, were given to the "Ladies" by royal personages and divers other dignitaries. The Duke of Orleans, when a refugee in England in 1789, knew and visited the "Eccentrics," and, we are told, presented Lady Eleanor with several French orders. She was proud of them and wore them on state occasions later in life. A chronicler remarks slyly, and none too respectfully:

"We may picture to ourselves those Orders and that of the Harp and Crown of Ireland, all displayed with a light blue ribbon on the dignified breast of Lady Eleanor; but when, through her imperfect vision, they became coated with melted butter and hair-powder, the sight must have been comical."

Bishop Heber had just written "From Greenland's icy mountains," and was on the eve of departure for "In-

dia's coral strand," to receive there the bishopric of Calcutta, when he paid the last of several visits to Plas Newydd. Sir Walter Scott was another guest. His son-in-law biographer says of the visit, paid in 1825,—and somewhat equivocally:

"We had read histories and descriptions enough of those romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused; but the reality surpassed all expectation."

He adds that Sir Walter was impressed by Miss Ponsonby's beautiful handwriting, and praised it to the venerable spinster.

In the same year (1825), Hon. George Canning, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, wrote to Lady Eleanor that his daughter, Lady Clanricarde, "is setting out for a visit to Wales, and looks forward to the pleasure of being presented to the Ladies of Llangollen.

"Mr. Canning wishes that he were to be of the party, instead of reassuming, about the same time, the toils of the House of Commons. He has, however,

a selfish reason for calling himself, at this moment, to the Ladies' recollection. They insisted that he should find some occasion for profiting by their kind offer of a specimen of Llangollen mutton. Now, he knows no more worthy occasion likely to occur in the whole year than that of the celebration of the King's birthday, which takes place on Saturday, 23d, on which day Mr. Canning entertains the Foreign Ministers.

"His addresss is—'Foreign Office,' for mutton, as well as for letters!"

Sir Humphrey Davy, William Wilberforce, the poet Southey, Edmund Burke, William Wordsworth, and Lords and Ladies innumerable, paid their respects to the now distinguished friends, and, as a German prince, who visited them in 1828, tells us—"There is scarcely a remarkable person of the last half-century who has not sent them a portrait, or some curiosity, or some remains of ancient art, as a token of remembrance." Some of these tokens were

very valuable. We have looked them over this morning with keen—sometimes amused—interest.

For, it cannot be denied that, in spite of the romantic flavour that surrounds and informs their history, through and through, and the undoubted fact that they were gentlewomen of rare accomplishments—the wonder grows as we read, and hear, and inspect their home:—What drew the fashionable world, with men of letters, artists, and foreign tourists, to this corner of North Wales, throughout that half-century?

Our German prince describes them as "peculiar in appearance, but quite up-to-date in their refined and elegant manners." He was much struck with "the genuine and unaffected attention paid by Miss Ponsonby to her older friend."

Lady Eleanor was now in her ninetieth year.

The celebrated comedian Charles Matthews, then at the height of his fame, enlightens us further upon a point

touched lightly by the gallant German. Perhaps because Lady Eleanor had been a famous rider in earlier life, fond of fox-hunting and other masculine amusements, the two adopted, soon after their flight into Wales, and never laid aside, a costume resembling Irish riding-habits, including the high hats then worn—and indeed, late into the forties—by women equestrians. The hats were always in the latest style of men's head-gear, and ordered from the most fashionable hatter in London.

Matthews's reputation had, of course, reached Plas Newydd, and, learning that he was to play in the theatre at Oswestry, twelve miles distant from Llangollen, the Ladies determined to see him. This was in 1820, Lady Eleanor being over eighty, and her "Beloved" sixty-five. They had their own carriage and did not send for the "Hand" chaise and four. They were driven over the mountain roads in season to take their places in the playhouse before the curtain rose. Matthews writes to a friend

of the superiority of the entertainment he had at sight of these spectators to any diversion his acting would have afforded them.

"I was highly flattered," he confesses, "as they had never been in the theatre before. They looked like two superannuated clergymen. As they are seated, there is not one point to distinguish them from men: the dresses and powdering of the hair, their well-starched neck-cloths; the upper parts of their habits (which they always wear, even at a dinner-party) made precisely like men's coats, with regular black beaver hats—everything contributing to this semblance. To crown all, they had crop heads, which were rough, bushy, and white as snow."

He informs his correspondent, in an ecstasy of glee, that he was so shaken by inward laughter at the unexpected sight that he could scarcely get through his part in the play.

A while later, he writes to the same confidante:

"I have to-day received an invitation to call on the dear old gentlemen *called* "Lady Butler" and "Miss Ponsonby."

In a third epistle, dated October 20, 1820, we have a still more graphic sketch from the facile pen of the wit:

"I mentioned to you in a former letter the effect they produced upon me in public, but never shall I forget the first burst yesterday, upon entering the drawing-room, to find the ante-diluvian darlings attired for dinner in the same manified dress, with the Croix de Saint Louis, and other orders, with myriads of large brooches with stones large enough for snuff-boxes, stuck in their starched neck-cloths.

"They returned home, fourteen miles, after midnight. They have not slept from home for more than forty years."

"Great Scott! but they must have been a holy show!" interpolates Young America, who has been reading the record over my shoulder, and whom I, forthwith, order, in part punishment

for the graceless speech, to copy the extract, and to transfer other items from the Expense-book to my portfolio. He grins more widely in transcribing that in which I descry a pathetic strain, in view of the character and surroundings of the mourners over the respective poodles, terriers, and cats here registered:

"Our precious and never-to-be-forgotten Loup's last expenses—four shillings, sixpence.

"Expenses attending the impassable [*sic*] and unlamented death of our dearest Crell—eightpence.

"The whole expenses of poor little Tippet's life and death—sixpence.

"Shaving Christian" (presumably a poodle)—"sixpence.

"Poor Tatters—aged 18, buried this morning—one shilling.

"To Simon, for placing our beautiful Tommy by his poor mother—sixpence.

"To Simon and William Jones, for saving the life of a Hedge-hog—sixpence.

"To Simon for bringing poor, *poor*

Brandy's body and burying it—one shilling."

Even "the boys" do not laugh at entries which prove the steadfastness of the attachment between the third of the Irish exiles and her nominal mistresses:

"Fowls for Mary's intended supper next Monday—two shillings.

"Cards and Lemons for Mary's guests, —ale and rum for the supper—eight shillings, sixpence.

"Box of Pills for Mary—four shillings, sixpence.

"To Wrexham for Mary's Rheumatic side—one shilling, sixpence."

Titled visitors wrote of "Mistress Mary," and desired that she should be assured of their "best wishes."

In sharing and abetting the flight of her "great ally, the lively Miss Ponsonby," to whom she was especially devoted, she had cut loose from native land and kindred.

"Few and far between were the letters she despatched, and those were appar-

ently trusted to some friend to deliver. Both Lady Eleanor and Miss Ponsonby had a great regard for her. She, seemingly, was the one who did all the marketing and anything that required a little diplomacy. Now and then, she was fêted and petted, and sent to spend the day at Brynkinallt and other places."

Tokens of these kindly acts crop up in the "account-book":

"Dick Morris, driving Mary to and from Brynkinallt—two shillings, sixpence.

"Mrs. Salter—five shillings for repairing Mary's watch.

"Mary's expenses to Chirk Castle—three shillings, sixpence."

Her tombstone in Llangollen churchyard shows that she was the first to leave the home her savings had bought, and her industry had helped to beautify. She left her later savings to "her first friend, Sarah Ponsonby," if she survived her. If not, to Lady Eleanor.

A clause that has in it an intimation of sarcastic significance, directs that her

mother is to have five pounds, "if living," and each of her brothers and sisters one shilling apiece—"if they shall come and demand it of her executrices." These were her late employers and staunch friends.

The monument "erected by Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby at Plas Newydd in this Parish," is three-sided, in evident anticipation of the time when the trio so long and closely united in life should sleep together in death. The inscription, "In Memory of Mrs. Mary Carryl," composed by one or both of her grateful survivors, extols her virtues in life and speaks of her Christian resignation in death:

Patient, industrious, faithful, generous, kind,
Her conduct left the proudest far behind;
Her virtues dignified her humble birth,
And raised her mind above this sordid earth.
Attachment (sacred bond of grateful breasts!)
Extinguished but with life, this tomb attests.
Reared by two friends who will her loss bemoan,
Till with her ashes here shall rest their own.

Young faces grow grave, and laughing voices are tender, as we look at a picture of the faithful servant. It is grotesque in itself. Mary is in the exact centre of her kitchen; the ponderous bunch of keys, her insignia of office, hangs from the hands joined over her white apron; she is planted squarely upon a pair of trimly-shod feet; her cap is reared aloft upon a roll of white hair. A saucepan simmers on the hob; a flower-pot is in the latticed window; a dog and a cat—perhaps "Tatters" and "Loup"—are cheek by jowl upon the hearth; another and bigger cat, maybe "our dearest Crell," occupies a bench in the background. Mary was no beauty, yet her smiling mouth and earnest eyes may have made her comely to those who knew her best.

Irrepressible Young America comes to the front again:

"Look at the wrists and the hands of her! You can understand why she was 'Molly the Bruiser!' To my way of

thinking, she is the most interesting of the Eccentrics!"

We come back to that word all the time. Another—a woman's voice—says tentatively, almost timidly:

"*Poseuses?*"

We stand in the rooms they furnished and lived in; the rooms in which they held court; where peers and peeresses sued to be "presented" to the twain whose fantastic appearance moved the prince of nineteenth century comedians to mirth that was well-nigh "inextinguishable":

I answer confidently—"Who, at any rate, believed in themselves!"

How seriously they took themselves, and how whole-souled was their enjoyment of their career, is evident in every feature of the homestead and grounds.

The second inscription on the monument we went to see this morning, in the yard of the church where the Ladies worshipped for half a century, records the death of Lady Eleanor in 1829. "Her

Beloved" wrote the epitaph. The last clause runs thus:

"Her various perfections, crowned by the most pious and cheerful submission to the Divine Will, can only be appreciated where it is humbly believed they are now enjoying their Eternal Reward, and by her, of whom for more than fifty years, they constituted that happiness which, through our blessed Redeemer, she trusts will be renewed when THIS TOMB shall have closed over its latest tenant.

"*Sorrow not as others who have no hope.*"

We make one more transcript from the biography before us:

"After the death of Lady Eleanor, Miss Ponsonby felt very desolate and heart-broken—making frequent visits to the grave of her 'precious, precious friend.' Toward the end of the year 1831 she became very feeble, and died on the 9th of December."

The epitaph set above her was prepared by the vicar of the church close

to the "Hand" inn. The first passages stand thus:

"SARAH PONSONBY

Departed this life on the 9th December
1831
Aged 76

"She did not long survive her beloved companion LADY ELEANOR BUTLER, with whom she had lived in this valley for more than half a century of uninterrupted friendship. "*But they shall no more return to their house, neither shall their place know them any more.*"

Six months thereafter, the celebrated auctioneer, Mr. George Robins, offered for sale at auction on Monday, the 13th day of August, "at the Domicile so long hallowed as the abode of Friendship,"

"INTERESTING AND VALUABLE PROPERTY

appertaining to the residence
and which for extent, variety and novelty,

PLAS NEWYDD, LLANGOLLEN

From a photograph by Valentine

is certainly unexampled in the Annals of Auctions, it having been congregated by those highly talented Ladies, the fair MISTRESSES OF PLAS NEWYDD, during a series of 50 years, aided by their joint taste, and at considerable expense."

Pages of italics and towering capitals set forth the riches of the mansion. Nothing was omitted. Autograph letters of numerous "renowned personages, particularly one written by Charles the First from Whitehall during his confinement"; a lock of Marie Stuart's hair; rich and varied carvings; a sideboard of plate—dishes and covers, salvers, waiters, tea and coffee equipages; fine cameos; a library of books comprising many thousand volumes, elegantly bound, etcetera, etcetera.

The etceteras are mine, not the celebrated auctioneer's. He made the best of curios collected from every quarter of the globe to beautify the wee corner consecrated to Friendship Perpetuated.

The cellar, stocked with rare wines and liquors, had honourable mention. A copy of the memoirs of the Duc de Montressor in scarlet morocco, was a gift to the Ladies from his Majesty the King of France, accompanied by an autograph letter asking their acceptance of the same in terms royalty might use to royalty.

The sale occupied seven days, and resulted in a grievous scattering of furniture and bric-a-brac.

Those were the dark ages of the historic spot. It was still, in a way, the showplace of the region. Catherine Sinclair, Scottish novelist and philanthropist, took in Plas Newydd in the course of a tour of Wales in 1833, a year after the auction, and spoke more slightingly of it than might have been expected of one whose works evince both sensibility and imagination.

"She saw in it little more than 'a memento of two Ladies who, for more than half a century, had devoted their

long lives to friendship, celibacy, and the knitting of blue stockings!'"

She said one apt thing of the house which recurs to the memory of each of our little party in the passage from one "restored" room to another:

"The house is long and low—so completely cased in richly carved oak that it might be mistaken for an enormous wardrobe."

The carvings are incredible and unaccountable, even after we are told by the pleasant-faced, sweet-voiced *cicerone* that certain portions were gifts from distinguished admirers,—for instance, the superb mantel bestowed by the Duke of Wellington, already mentioned,—and that the elaborately wrought stair-rail was put into the hall on the occasion of a visit from Queen Victoria. Another explanation of the antique and fine carved work decorating every room is that the ruined abbey of Valle Crucis, which we explored this forenoon, yielded up many valuable bits that were wisely

and not irreverently utilised in the embellishment of Friendship's Shrine. It does not shock us to hear that this and that cornice, or panel, or doorway was originally a part of the abbey. The ruin was at the mercy of an ignorant peasantry who would as soon use altar-rail and rood-screen for firewood as to cut brushwood from the hedges to keep their huts warm in winter. Here the art-treasures were safe and appreciated.

"Plas Newydd," we read, "was, in 1876, on the point of falling into the hands of a metropolitan firm of old carved-oak-dealers when it was purchased by the late General Yorke, C.B., a gentleman who had been intimately acquainted with the ladies in his Eton school-days. He thus saved the revered old domicile from being despoiled and ruined, filled the rooms with rare antiquities, and converted the grounds, so far as was practicable, to their former loveliness. . . . In 1878–79, the General added an extensive wing to the back of the

house; and just before his death, a lodge, which he styled 'The Hermitage,' was erected at the northwest point of the property. When, at the age of seventy-six, he died in 1890, he was succeeded by G. H. Robertston, Esq., of Liverpool, a well-known antiquary, who purchased the property."

Mr. Robertson's name had become most pleasantly familiar to us through the talk of residents of Llangollen, before the receipt of the courteous "permit" to see the wonderful house in person. The public at large no longer has the run of dwelling and grounds, as was the case for some years after he had secured, at great expense, all the relics of the Ladies to be found in the neighbourhood, and restored every room as nearly as possible to the aspect it wore when the distinguished Eccentrics reigned here. How admirably he has succeeded in the work would not be credited by those who have not been favoured, as are we, with a sight of the Welsh *château*. Lady Eleanor's

bed is hung with the curtains that shut her in from wintry winds for forty-odd years, and the counterpane covering it was wrought by her fingers. In another room we have more of her embroidery in a pair of silk curtains that are beginning to give way under the weight of years—literally falling to pieces under the heavy work. The antique sideboards are laden with silver as ancient; treasures of fäience, cut-glass, bronze, and marble, the authenticity of which is undoubted, glitter and gleam before our dazed sight—dazed by the prodigality of the exhibition.

Well-meaning Wordsworth — reminiscent, amid the comparative affluence of Rydal Mount, of the beloved plain living and high thinking of Dove Cottage, where he cut up wood for the fire over which Dorothy was to cook the dinner—wrote, at the request of the Ladies, a poem commemorative of his visit to Plas Newydd. Oblivious of the lineage of the patrician dames, of whose withered hands Lady Eleanor would have said,

Princes have lipped them trembling,

and all unmoved by the suite of elegant apartments through which he was led in state, the guileless Lake Poet began the lines with an apostrophe to

The low-roofed cot on Deva's banks.

"Deva" was the ancient name of the Dee, on the banks of which stands Llangollen. (See to it that you do not fail to pronounce it *Langothlen!*)

I hope—I am quite sure—that perfect breeding held the hostesses back from letting the luckless rhymester know that they resented the belittlement of their "delicious abode." Other friends heard their complaint, and were diverted thereat.

Leaving what is a colossal casket of treasures, we are conducted by the interesting guide—a member of the household — through the spacious grounds. They remain as they were laid out by the exiles. Their passion for outdoor life was one of the causes of long lives

and continued activities that made them a benefaction to their poorer neighbours, a perpetual source of wonder to those of their own rank. Strolling through a wood flanking the gardens, we cross a rustic bridge to a grottoed fountain, seen in the picture of the Ladies with which we are most familiar. Upon the rising ground beyond the purling stream is a summer-house, completely embowered by the wood, where the pair loved to sit with books and work. The practical member of the party opines shrewdly that "they could have had no rheumatic tendencies, or they would have chosen a drier spot." We find the green glooms slightly chill in the very heart of the August day. Yet, somehow, the shades of the friends are more like real people here than in the luxuriously appointed dwelling. Miss Ponsonby was the taller, albeit the junior and the more dependent of the two. But we hear how, when age bowed Lady Eleanor's figure into absolute dwarfish-

ness, her "Beloved" became the protector and support of her to whom she had looked up and deferred since the school-girl cast in her lot with the fascinating, strong-willed woman of the world, who was sixteen years older than herself.

We bring away with us a copy of the one really authentic picture of the Ladies —if we except, possibly, that to which I referred just now. They sit at the library-table over there, just where they were posed by the artist, a personal friend who always condemned the outdoor picture. The costume is identically that described by Matthews between his bursts of inextinguishable laughter. We take upon trust the tale that Lady Eleanor was a beauty and a belle in her early womanhood, and Sarah Ponsonby more than pretty. A sigh gets the better of the smile with which we survey the bowed forms, the whitened hair, the flaccid lines of the faces.

As we bid our kindly *cicerone* "Good-

bye," and accept an armful of memorial ivies from the head gardener;—and as we enter our carriage and are driven back to our cozy quarters at the "Hand,"—our minds are busy with one question:

Is human friendship—the love of one good woman for another, of a strain so fine and true as to outlast a half-century of time and change—so phenomenal a product of human nature as to make the pair with whom it was possible the Unique of the age in which they lived?

III

CHARLES FIRST IN WEST-MINSTER HALL

III

CHARLES FIRST IN WESTMINSTER HALL

WESTMINSTER Hall was founded and partly built in 1097 by William Rufus, the ill-fated son of The Conqueror.

It is magnificent in proportions, being 290 feet long and 68 feet in breadth, while the vaulted roof of carved oak—the largest in the world unsupported by columns—rises to a height of 92 feet above the floor.

Besides our small party, not a tourist was in the place at our first visit, and of this we were exceeding glad. The Hall is a vestibule to the Houses of Parliament, and Parliament was not in session. Moreover, London fog had bedaubed streets and buildings

with a wash of sepia, and now and then splashes of rain faltered through the brown-grey mists to the pavement. It was not a day for sight-seers to take their walks abroad. It *was* a typical day for ghost-walking, and the vast spaces were thronged with them.

It was England's Hall of Justice in the earlier years of her power. Here, William Wallace, the dauntless defender of Scottish liberties, heard his death-sentence; here, Sir Thomas More, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, Guy Fawkes, and the Earl of Strafford were handed over to the headsman.

This last was dragged down to ruin in the desperate struggle of his kingly master with the Parliamentary party led by Cromwell and Pym. In like extremity, the hunted mother of the Russian story yielded, first, one child, and then three, to the wolfish pack to save her own wretched life.

The comparison is not august, but it seems apt to us as we pause to read

the lettering of the marble tablet let into the floor in the middle of the Hall, to mark the spot where Strafford stood to be tried by those he scorned, to the last, to acknowledge as his peers.

"In the Earl of Strafford," writes an impartial historian, "the very genius of tyranny was embodied. If he shared his master's belief that the arbitrary power which Charles was wielding formed part of the old constitution of the country, and that Commons had gone out of their ancient bounds in limiting the royal prerogative, he was clear-sighted enough to see that the only way of permanently establishing absolute rule in England was not by reasoning, or by the force of custom, but by the force of fear."

And again, apropos of Strafford's "Rule of Terror," as Lord Deputy of Ireland:

"His aim was to read a lesson to England and to the King, by showing how completely that dreaded thing, a Parlia-

ment, could be made the organ of the royal will, and his success was complete."

Complete certainly, so far as the King was concerned. The evil seed fell into prepared and genial soil. The divine right of kings was the fetish to which Charles I. sacrificed truth, honour, friendship, his crown, and his life. Almost a century before Strafford became the stern schoolmaster of England and of England's monarch, Mary of Lorraine, the great-grandmother of Charles Stuart, put upon record as a leading article of her political creed:

"*Princes ought not to be urged with their promises further than suits their convenience to observe them.*"

The poison wrought mightily in the Stuart blood through succeeding generations. No prime minister of any of the dynasty was more consistent in dogged fidelity to the infernal tenet than Strafford. When the Commons declared that "redress of grievances must precede the grant of supplies," and that no subsidy

could be granted "till security was had for religion, for property, and for the liberties of Parliament"—Strafford maintained that Charles was "freed from all rule of government, and therefore justified in helping himself to whatever he needed."

The minister may have been, as the chronicler says, "more than a mere servile instrument of tyranny." His loyalty to the king who had called him to his side never wavered.

At the behest of that sovereign he presented himself, in the hour he knew to be rife with peril to himself, before the court assembled in the Hall to debate upon the high-handed policy he and his master had carried beyond the endurance of a long-suffering people. Strafford was ready to go forth to meet whatever might await him there, when his conference with Charles was broken up by the news that Pym—the boldest of the Parliament faction—was actually, at that hour, impeaching him for high treason.

I copy from an ancient chronicle what followed the amazing intelligence:

"With speed he comes to the House; he calls rudely at the door; with a proud, glooming look makes his way towards his place at the Board-head."

He was intercepted before he could take his seat, and rudely expelled from the Hall while the discussion of his guilt progressed. Surrounded by unfriendly warders, he was kept waiting without the door, in sight of his coach and liveried attendants, until the order for his recall was issued. Then he stood in the middle of the room, aloof from his wonted place and associates, and strove to enter a haughty protest against the right of the House to sit in judgment upon one who had the King's warrant for all he had done. He was hustled from the Hall as soon as the papers committing him to the Tower were made out. At the door his sword was wrested from him.

"This done, he makes through a number of people to his coach," pursues

the narrator, "no man capping to him before whom, that morning, the greatest of all England would have stood uncovered."

A more formal impeachment was the next step in his degradation. The King, we read, "threw no obstacles in the way of the impeachment." It is well established that he had pledged his royal word to the fallen favourite not to desert him in his extremity. Strafford's most obnoxious acts were in direct obedience to the orders of his chief. Sustained by the assurance of that chief's support, he met the trial with fortitude worthy of a nobler cause. The ordeal was prolonged for fifteen days, the accused acting as his own advocate, "pleading with remarkable courage and ingenuity, and moving his audience to tears by the pathos of his defence."

Charles was not idle or indifferent during the fortnight's battle. He lent an attentive ear to a proposition, submitted to him by Parliamentary agents,

which promised a peaceful solution of the vexed matters on foot, with no loss of kingly prerogatives. He assented willingly to each clause, only stipulating that "Episcopacy should not be abolished [himself being the Head of the Church] nor Strafford executed."

Then the bomb burst in the discovery that, while hearkening amiably to the conditions of the compromise, he was manœuvring secretly with the authors of a plot to incite the disaffected of the army to march upon London, seize the Tower, liberate Strafford, and put down the Parliament.

On May 8, 1641, Strafford, standing erect and unashamed in his place at the bar where he had pleaded vainly during the fifteen crucial days, heard himself condemned to die on the block. He bore himself as haughtily as when he had tried to force his way through his enemies to his place at the Board-head. Tradition says that he listened with a smile to the reading of the writ of execution.

And why not? The paper was valueless without the royal signature and seal. And even yet—when his adversaries were spreading themselves like green bay trees, and insolent in the greatness of their power—his head was safe while the prince's promise held fast.

He went back to the Tower and awaited the result,—not uncheerfully.

It was made known to him after forty-eight hours.

The gruesome Russian tale recurs again to us. If false to his leal ally and bosom counsellor, Charles was true to the traditions of his race. The Stuart blood arose to the exigency to which stubborn adherence to the cardinal principle of the divine rights of an anointed monarch had brought him. It would be dangerously inconvenient to observe his promise to save Strafford's life. He signed the warrant for the execution under the terrible stress of public sentiment and private importunity. The wolves of organised rebellion and

party fury were gaining fast upon him. The issues at stake had narrowed down to two:

Strafford must be sacrificed, or Strafford's master. Charles is said to have wept bitterly after the instrument left his hands.

The peasant mother went mad with remorse when she found herself in safety, and childless.

In the thought of this betrayal, Strafford's last words gather deep meaning:

"I am no more afraid of death, but put off my doublet at this time" (upon the scaffold) "as cheerfully as ever I did when I went to bed."

The shouts of joy that rent the heavens, the songs of the dancers about the bonfires blazing at the street-corners, and the clash of bells from the steeples, which announced the fall of the axe, must have been heard by the King if he were in, or near the city, and his motions were too jealously watched for him to venture far away.

Distractions were speedily offered to draw his mind away from Strafford's fate. He had signified his consent to the new measures proposed by Parliament, and in the same spirit that guided his hand in signing the death-warrant of his best friend. The paragraph which relates the incident of the conciliatory act informs us that "he regarded his consent as having been extorted by force, and to be retracted at the first opportunity."

Opportunities were not few, as we all know, and we know, too, how they were improved. One is commemorated in a tablet on the east wall of Westminster Hall. It marks the former position of an archway now closed. On January 4, 1642, the King passed from the Hall through this door into the adjoining House of Commons, attended by a crowd of Cavaliers as far as the archway. He had refused to give a guard to the party opposed to his policy—who were already nicknamed "Roundheads"—en-

gaging, however, "on the honour of a King," to protect them from violence or any unfair play of whatsoever sort. His errand to-day was to arrest and commit to the Tower, upon the charge of high treason, five members of the House now in session. Prominent among the "suspects" were Hampden and Pym.

Luckily, the birds had flown, having been apprised of the danger.

"Had the King found them there, and called in his guards to seize them"—is the comment of an eyewitness of the extraordinary scene—"members of the House would have endeavoured the defence of them, which might have proved a very unhappy and sad business."

A very temperate statement of the terrible probability that House and Hall would have been flooded with the best blood of the realm had the King, in his self-appointed rôle of Chief of Police, "found them there."

We turn away from the significant mural tablet and walk slowly and softly

as to a shrine—despite the history we had been reviewing—to another square of white marble set in the third of the steps at the upper end of the Hall. Here is where the princely prisoner sat and stood in his turn, to answer for deeds done in his comely body during the twenty-four years of his reign as King of Great Britain and Defender of the Faith. It is easy from our coign of vantage to picture the scene as it met his eyes. The superb sweep of the self-supporting ceiling, nearly one hundred feet above our heads, and the stained window at the far end of the vista, were the same then as now. But the floor was filled with benches; the bar dividing the accused from his judges ran a few feet below the step on which we have halted. A fourth tablet indicates the location. Cromwell was the leading actor in the prosecution. He warned the House on the morning of the first day of the trial that they "must decide speedily what answer they must give the King. For he will immediately

ask by what authority you pretend to judge him."

Charles was brought into the Hall by a powerful guard and conducted to his place inside the bar. He seated himself and, without removing his hat, calmly surveyed the crowd.

One who stood near him writes:

"With a quick eye and gesture, he turned him about, noting, not only those who were on each side of the Court, but even the spectators who were in the Hall."

It was an unspoken and eloquent arraignment of those who were guilty of the sacrilege of haling the Lord's anointed before an earthly tribunal. "The divinity that doth hedge a king" was his panoply in that hour and even unto death.

The boldest of the expectant throng was awed by the mien of the so-called prisoner.

In his prime Charles I. was reckoned the handsomest man in his dominions.

The trials of the past two years had scattered white hairs through his abundant curls and drawn sharp lines in his face. His was, nevertheless, the most courtly presence of all there assembled that day. His features were refined and ennobled by sorrow.

As Cromwell had predicted, the sovereign asserted his independence of the authority that had summoned him to the court. He interrupted the first section of the indictment droned in stentorian tones, "in the name of the Commons and the people of England." The reader paid no attention to the challenge and droned on. Charles leaned forward and touched him on the shoulder with his cane. The action loosened the gold head of the cane, which, an English dramatist tells us, "was in the likeness of a kingly crown." It fell to the floor and rolled out of the King's reach. The incident was made much of at the time as an omen by the superstitious of both parties. Several minutes passed before

the clerk of the court could proceed with the indictment. Cries of "God save the King!" and groans of protest were silenced by the men-at-arms, and the trial went on.

Life-sized statues of various sovereigns line the east wall of the stately room. We give little heed to William and Mary; to James First of England and Sixth of Scotland; to George Fourth, "the First Gentleman in England," and to "Sailor King Billy," William the Fourth. We return again and again to the contemplation of the gallant figure standing third in the line from the lower door. The face is fine and sweet of expression; the pose of head and form is full of manly grace.

"Every inch the King!" The phrase is robbed of triteness by pertinent application to the noble statue from which we cannot withdraw our eyes. Thus he must have stood where that dumb tablet is set into the pavement, serenely defiant of accuser and witness.

Truce-breaker; false to friend and to foe; plausible of tongue; perfidious and arrogant in deed—he may have been all these, and worse. While we count his misdeeds, our sympathies go out to him in a flood that makes rank Jacobites of us for the time.

The trial lasted a week. We try not to reflect, at the moment, that Strafford's was twice as long, and what hope sustained him as it dragged its slow length along. The King's courage never faltered, and, what did him more honour, his exquisite courtesy to his attendants, and affectionate consideration for the few friends who were allowed to minister to him, abated not under the sting of insults that were a disgrace to the coarse habits and speech of the day.

In the tender sincerity of our pity, we strive, in reciting the complaint, to forget that the sovereign, in the exercise of the divine right "invested" in him by "nature, law and divine decree," betrayed the trust of some of his most loving

subjects who would have laid down their lives for him.

"Do not speak of the men into whose hands I have fallen!" was his injunction to his spiritual adviser. "They thirst for my blood. They shall have it. God's will be done! I give Him thanks. I forgive them all sincerely, but let us say no more about them."

Yet, the fatal ruling passion flashed up brightly on the very scaffold. The executioner, as was his custom, begged the doomed man's pardon for what he was about to do.

Charles drew himself up to his full height, looking him steadily in the eyes:

"No! I forgive no subject of mine who comes deliberately to shed my blood!"

The blood that streamed from his headless body upon the sill of the window through which it was borne from the scaffold erected in the street, into the banqueting-room of Whitehall!

The awful stains were still darkly visible when his granddaughter Mary, the

consort of William of Orange,—buxom and bland—held her brilliant drawing-rooms in that apartment.

She, likewise, was a Stuart, and "convenient" memories were a family characteristic.

IV

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY AT PENSHURST

IV

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THE exterior of Penshurst Castle, the ancestral home of the Sidneys, was a disappointment to us all. The broad lawns beyond the wall surrounding the outer court-yard are ill-kept; the turf is ragged, and the woods lying between the park and the public thoroughfare are tame and choked with undergrowth. Nor is the frontage of the house imposing. The historical pile might be a municipal headquarters, or a free hospital—or a Hudson County (N. J.) almshouse.

Almost three centuries before we beheld it for the first time, Ben Jonson had confessed the like sense of disenchantment, and apologised for what caused it:

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show
Of touch, or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roof of gold;
Thou hast no lanthorn whereof tales are told;
Or stair or courts; but stand'st, an ancient pile,
And, those grudged at, art reverenced the while.

Done into twentieth-century prose, the apology signifies that the homely, rectangular edifice we survey with dismay had higher claims upon student, poet, and historian than mere architectural beauty.

The most retentive memory owned by our pilgrim band is ready with another extract from Jonson's eulogy.

On November 30, 1554, the head forester of Penshurst was ordered to set out a tree in the park to commemorate the birth of an heir to Sir Henry Sidney, the lord of the manor. Rare Ben Jonson indicates that it was a nut-bearing sapling:

That taller tree of which the nut was set
At his great birth, where all the muses met.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

From an engraving, by H. Robinson, of Zucchero's portrait at Penshurst

We have heard the history of the giant chestnut thus honoured, and that it was uprooted by the windy storm and tempest, more than a hundred years ago. So, we are not to be deluded into a tramp across the neglected sward to see the oak which has served as a snare to part the relic-loving tourist from his money ever since the ancient Kentish mansion became a show-place.

The chestnut was here in Edmund Waller's day. He alludes to it as

> Yonder tree which stands, the sacred mark
> Of noble Sidney's birth.

Sir Henry Sidney was the early playfellow of Edward Sixth, and the youthful monarch breathed out his feeble life in the arms of his faithful friend. Before this event, the rising courtier had married the beautiful daughter of the Duke of Northumberland who was also Earl of Warwick. Her husband brought her to Penshurst when the accession of Mary Tudor laid Northumberland's head on

the block. Less than a year thereafter, Lord Guilford Dudley (the brother of Lady Sidney) and his girl-wife, Lady Jane Grey, met a like fate.

It is odd to read, in connection with the execution of the young heir's grandfather for the treasonable attempt to bar Mary from her father's throne, that the infant Sidney was christened "Philip" out of compliment to Queen Mary's husband, whom, in the spring of 1554, Sir Henry had escorted from Spain to be married to the sister of the dead boy-king.

The Bear and Ragged Staff, adopted by Henry Sidney, in right of his wife, a daughter of the House of Warwick, was then even more conspicuous in the Castle than it is now.

It meets our eyes at every turn through the halls and corridors. The crest of the Sidneys—an uncommonly ugly porcupine—is combined with those of the Warwicks, the Leicesters, and the Dudleys. If there be any force in the time-

battered motto "*Noblesse oblige*," the scion of the quartette of houses was burdened with a tremendous accumulation of responsibilities at his entrance upon mortal existence.

A chronicler remarks, apropos of the rank maintained by Sir Henry at Mary's court, that he "was, nevertheless, neither liked, nor liking as he had been." Why, then, did the new sovereign confirm him in his holding of Penshurst?

We linger awhile to debate the question when we have paid our shilling per head at the doorway of the stately porch, sitting upon the benches lining two sides of it, and gazing into the dim recesses of the vaulted roof. Penshurst was venerable before—as the tablet let into the front of the porch sets forth —"The most religious and renowned Prince Edward the Sixth, King of England, France, and Ireland," bestowed all "Mannors, Landes, and Appurtenances" thereof upon the grandfather of Philip Sidney in 1547.

The great hall is, in all important features, the same now as when Henry Sidney's eldest-born, lately christened under the name of his most puissant Majesty the King of Spain, was displayed by the nurse to the retainers who feasted at the tables running down the walls on each side of the vast room, from the superb carved screen below the minstrels' gallery, shutting off the lower end, to the dais at the farther boundary where sat the family and their guests. The boards of the table at the left are cut rudely, as with a jack-knife in untrained hands, into figures of bird, beast, and fish. Were it not that the cuttings go clear through the wood, as if the carvings had been fashioned before they were fitted into the boards, one might suppose the fantastic designs to have been the pastime of idle henchmen, lolling on the benches after appetite was satiated, awaiting the signal of departure from their lord. This happened ofttimes when merry converse with his friends

THE MINSTRELS' GALLERY IN THE BARONIAL HALL OF PENSHURST PLACE

and the passing of many beakers of wine prolonged the revel.

None below the salt might quit their places until the dais was vacated and the noble family had left the Hall by door and stairs leading to what was then called "the Solar"—the master's own apartment, and used as a withdrawing-room by the ladies, if their lords tarried long over wine and politics. Even though the platform were cleared of their superiors, the retainers, who had no other gathering-place than this on stormy nights, were not released from surveillance. A slit in the wall at the back of the dais opens directly into the "Solar." When rustic mirth waxed loud, and camp tales went briskly around, and home-brewed ale flowed too freely, the more staid of the company reminded their comrades by wink and gesture that the eye of the master was probably singling out the most obstreperous through the peep-hole contrived for this purpose, and none other.

The Hall is over sixty feet long and very lofty. The only means of warming it was by a huge fire built upon a stone hearth in the exact centre of the floor. The wrought-iron fire-dogs, curiously twisted, are still in place, and immense logs of wood, that might be as old, are heaped against them. The smoke had no vent except an opening in the ceiling. This—still visible—was called "a smoke-louvre," and protected by a cupola from rain and snow which would otherwise have fallen freely into the Hall below. When winds were high and variable, drifts and eddies of smoke must have blinded the eyes and choked the speech of the convivial circle collected about the hearth.

The member with a memory has a story that throws a lurid light upon the probable tenor of the tales exchanged by tenants and soldiery.

Sir Henry Sidney was, for a long term of years, Lord Deputy of Ireland. He wrote indignantly to London of the

"monstrous, monarchical tyrant," Shane O'Neill, who had robbed England of half the rebellious island which was even then a running sore in the body politic. O'Neill defied the forces sent to dispossess him, and Sir Henry, a brave and skilled warrior, took the field in person to evict him. The hapless wretch, hunted from lair to lair, was at length betrayed by his own men, killed, and beheaded. His head, "pickeled in a pipkin," was brought in triumph to the Lord Deputy.

We do not incline kindly to the idea that this may have been one of the fireside recitals that fed the imagination of the growing boy. It spoils the picture we had framed in our minds of the engaging baby, petted and dandled by the bearded men who had shared his father's fortunes in the "savage isle"—as the peruked and curled and perfumed cavaliers in the Solar above had basked in the reflected glories of his success at Court.

Sir Fulke Greville, afterward Lord

Brooke—the kinsman, secretary, and life-long ally of Philip Sidney—whose epitaph, dictated by himself, has, as a climax, "the friend of Sir Philip Sidney," says of his exemplar:

"I lived with him and knew him from a child, yet I never knew him other than a man, with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity as carried grace and reverence above greater years."

The boy could write and speak in French and in Latin before he was sent, at twelve years of age, to school at Shrewsbury.

The first letter ever written to him by his father is presumptive evidence against the "pickled head" legend. After enjoining upon his son "never to omit, as the first action of the day, the lifting of your mind to Almighty God by hearty prayer,—the practice of courtesy, affability and truth-telling, even in trifles," and the continual remembrance of "what noble blood you are descended from by your mother's side,"—the parent

exhorts him to "think, that only by virtuous life and good action you may be an ornament to that illustrious family!"

The letter concludes with the assurance that the writer will be "Your loving father, so long as you live in the fear of God."

As was the custom of all lads of noble lineage and fortune, Philip took with him to Shrewsbury a personal attendant, a composite between guardian and valet.

This functionary, Thomas Marshall by name, kept a strict account of every penny expended by, or for his charge, and duly transmitted the report to Sir Henry. The student had an attack of illness that first year—presumably measles, or other cutaneous disorder, for Marshall bought perfumes "to air his chamber after his recovery," and three shillings and sixpence went for a yard of cloth to make boot-hose, the convalescent "having none but a pair of linen which were too thin to ride in after his disease." Sixpence was paid out for "an ounce of oil of roses

and another for calomel" (query, chamomile?) "to supple his knee, which he could not ply or bend." Among the books bought for him, "Virgil" and "Calvin's Catechism" stand side by side with "Doing of Tullius's Offices."

After hearing of one pair of linen breeches, it is not a surprise to read that Marshall was panic-struck when, in 1566, his young master was invited to a house-party at Kenilworth. The frugal custodian's fear lest Master Philip's wardrobe would not find favour in the eyes of his "Uncle of Leicester," was based upon some knowledge of that nobleman's tastes and the habits of his household. The Earl met his nephew at Coventry, and forthwith proceeded to fit him, from top to toe, with apparel that befitted the solemnity of his début in the society of which he was to be the star and glory in another decade.

Two years later, he was entered at Christ Church, Oxford. At eighteen, he was sent by Queen Elizabeth—who had

ever an eye for a fine young man—to travel and study on the continent. Three weeks after he was presented to Charles Ninth, and made much of at the French Court, besides receiving the title of "Baron de Sidney," the stanch youthful Protestant narrowly escaped death by taking refuge in the house of the British ambassador on the Eve of Saint Bartholomew. Three years were spent in travel, study, and association with the most learnèd men in France, Italy, and Germany.

We hear of another, and a surpassingly brilliant gathering at Kenilworth in 1575. It taxes credulity to read that the most conspicuous figure in the splendid cortège which welcomed the maiden Queen to Leicester's most magnificent residence, was the stripling who had not quite completed his twenty-first year.

A writer, than whom none is less given to extravagant praise of popular favourites, has written of Philip Sidney, within a half-century:

"He was the idol of his time, and perhaps no figure reflects his age more fully and more beautifully. Fair as he was brave; quick of wit as of affection; noble and generous in temper; dear to Elizabeth as to Spenser; the darling of the Court and of the camp—his learning and his genius made him the centre of the literary world which was springing into birth on English soil."

Nothing in his wonderful life is more extraordinary than that the idolised darling of Court and camp remained absolutely unspoiled by adulation that had no ebb-tide. Everybody loved him, from the capricious Queen—with whom he was but once in disgrace—to the meanest hind upon the Penshurst estate. By some inexplicable charm—a phenomenal endowment of what we name, now-a-days, "personal magnetism"—he escaped the woe pronounced upon those of whom all men speak well. Camden, a contemporary, calls him—"The great glory of his family, the great hope of mankind, the

most lively pattern of virtue, the glory of the world." And nobody attempted to gainsay Camden. The story is without parallel in history, ancient or modern.

One of Elizabeth's most absurd pretences of intended marriage—the farce of the projected alliance with the Duc d'Anjou—aroused the faithful subject and true man, who seemed to stand highest in her favour just then, to a protest against what he knew would be ill-judged and disastrous. Philip Sidney wrote to the Queen, remonstrating with her, earnestly and respectfully, and entreating her not to do her people and herself such a wrong as must come from a union with the French prince. The royal coquette's temper blazed up at his audacity, and she sent him down to Penshurst to think over his mistake and to repent in solitude. To his banishment from the sunshine of her presence we owe *Arcadia*, the best-known of his literary productions. That summer of exile was the halcyon season of his checkered life.

His companion was his belovèd sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke. They were singularly congenial in mind as in heart, and in the dear seclusion of the old home, they collaborated now in a metrical translation of the Psalms. That same summer, Philip began *Arcadia* at her suggestion, reading it to her, page by page, as it was written.

I have a queer old wood-cut of the title-page of the poem over which critics and Court went wild. Green styles it "a pastoral medley, forced, tedious, and yet strangely beautiful." The reading-public of Sidney's day would accept the last clause of the description and reject the rest.

The title-page runs thus:

"*The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia. Written by Sir Philip Sidney, Knight. Now the third time published with new additions by the same Author.*"

A plumed knight guards the inscription on the left. A helmeted woman supports the right. Porcupines, bears,

lions, and cupids ramp over the border. None of the grotesque devices that delighted the Elizabethan era interest us as do the tender grace and playfulness of the dedication to his sister. She was the "Urania" of Edmund Spenser, and the inspiration of this, her brother's *magnum opus*. Her epitaph by Ben Jonson has made the world familiar with

> Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.

The rest follows mechanically from the reader's memory and lips:

> Death! ere thou hast slain another
> Learnèd, fair and good as she,
> Time shall throw a dart at thee.

The life led by the devoted brother and sister during that idyllic midsummer is a lovely episode in a history which was a romance from first to last.

Their portraits hang in the long galleries to which we made our way when we left the haunted Great Hall. The

picture of Philip, taken the next year, at the Queen's gracious behest, by her own artist, Zucchero, shows the favourite at his best estate. The face is full of sensibility, intellectual power and sweetness, and refined in every lineament. His figure is noble: the hands are patrician, and beautifully shaped. Yet his friends agree that no portrait did even partial justice to the manly grace and animation that won for him the fame of being "the comeliest courtier" who bent knee to the great Elizabeth.

She recalled him to Court in the autumn, and accepted, with laughing appreciation of their significance, three New Year's gifts from the forgiven culprit. They were a jewelled riding-whip, indicating that he had been chastised; a gold chain, expressive of his restored allegiance, and a gold and gemmed heart, testifying that he was now entirely hers.

The smile of indulgent amusement with which we con the list, broadens into

THE BARONIAL HALL OF PENSHURST PLACE

a laugh, in reading that Sir Philip's gift to his regal enslaver, on the New Year preceding his banishment was a *fine lawn chemise*, embroidered with black silk! and a pair of the high ruffs that still bear her name. They are stiff with gold spangles.

"Other days, other manners!"

Elizabeth visited Penshurst, once and again, in her many "progresses." And here, as everywhere else, the Earl of Leicester was her shadow. As Philip Sidney's uncle, he was especially at home under this roof. Her picture, by Zucchero, painted in a hideous fancy dress, has a conspicuous place in one of the Penshurst galleries. The Italian artist obeyed so literally her impatient order "to put no shadows in her face, for there were none there by nature," that her pictures are as flat and toneless as those on a Japanese tea-tray. One suspects him of a dash of malicious humour—engendered possibly by some snub administered by the crowned virago—as

one surveys a canvas occupying, I should say, about twenty feet of wall-space. It commemorates a ball given during a royal visit to the Castle. All the dancers are historical portraits. We remark none except the couple that hold the centre of the stage. The custodian of the gallery explains that, in one figure of the gavotte or minuet, or by whatsoever name the dance was called, the gallant extended his leg horizontally, then bent the knee at a right angle into a seat for his partner. Leicester, with a grin that distorts a handsome face into likeness to an ogling satyr, is thus supporting the Queen.

It is not a "nice" picture. Yet Philip Sidney, clean of life, and fastidious of taste, is in the same set.

Once more—and emphatically—"other times, other manners!"

Fair Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, may have been one of the dancers at this ball. We know that Philip Sidney was, by now, so enamoured

of her that she was enshrined in his verse as "Stella."

> Stella! in whose shining eyes
> Are the lights of Cupid's skies;
> Whose beams, where they once are darted,
> Love therewith is straight imparted.

Her name falls into line with Sidney's as naturally as that of Beatrice with Dante's.

When the Earl of Essex was appointed Marshal of Ireland, he took with him to the turbulent island, his daughter's betrothed, whom he named fondly his "son by adoption." The young Sidney was in another part of the country when news reached him that his chief was dangerously ill and "yearned exceedingly" to see him before he died. Philip travelled by day and night only to reach the death-bed a few hours too late to receive a parting blessing.

Yet he never married Stella! He had loved her for six years when—by what influence his admiring biographers never

knew—she was "forced to wed with Lord Rich." After the manner of Dante and of Petrarch—both of whom he studied and imitated—he continued to enshrine Stella in his verse as his spiritual mate, immortalising her in the sonnets, "Astrophel and Stella," considered then, as now, the choicest gems of his art.

In all else his prosperity waned not. He was knighted at twenty-nine, just after the Queen, who had restored his father to the office of Lord Deputy of Ireland, negatived the old man's prayer that his son Philip should go with him. She "would not suffer him out of her sight."

As was to be expected, she frowned savagely upon the idol's marriage to Frances Walsingham, a girl of sixteen whom he had petted in her cradle. The families were already connected by the marriage of relatives of bride and groom. Philip, at twenty-nine, grave, courtly, and accomplished, an eminent author and diplomatist, must have shone as a demi-

god in the eyes of the unsophisticated maiden to whom he gave his name. We are fain to believe that all of the heart Stella had spared to him went with his hand and troth. His father declares that "joyful love and great liking exists between our most dear and loving children," and sends his "love and blessing, with a buss to our sweet daughter."

Two years later, Elizabeth thwarted a cherished plan of Sir Philip Sidney's devising. This was to plant in person a new colony in America. Sir Francis Drake and he were the sanguine leaders in the enterprise.

The Queen had graciously "passed over the offence" of Philip's marriage, condoning it publicly by standing godmother to his first child, "Elizabeth." But she would not put the ocean between herself and the darling of Court and camp. She sent him, instead, to the Netherlands to help the Dutch fight the Spaniards. It is a comfort to know that the young wife accompanied her husband, for both his

parents died that same year. Sir Henry Sidney and his eldest-born had been devoted intimates since the boy's birth. Of his mother he wrote, on receiving the heavy news that she had followed her husband to another world—"I have had nothing but light from her."

Six weeks after the death of Lady Sidney, and while the sorrow was still fresh in the heart of her son, a desperate battle took place between the allied forces and the Spaniards under the walls of Zutphen. At the third charge made by the English, Sir Philip Sidney valiantly leading it, he was wounded so severely that he was carried from the field.

We will let his "friend," Sir Fulke Greville, tell the rest: "And being thirsty with excess of bleeding, he called for drink, which was presently brought him; but as he was putting the bottle to his mouth, he saw a poor soldier passing along, ghastly casting up his eyes at the bottle, which Sir Philip perceiving, he took it from his mouth before he drank,

and delivered it to the poor man with these words—'Thy necessity is greater than mine!'"

The simple incident is more widely known than any other in the career of one of the purest and truest heroes who ever bore the image of his Maker. It has taught the lesson of self-sacrifice and the highest style of courtesy to thousands. Every school-boy can tell the story, albeit he may have but a hazy idea of who and what his hero was.

He lived for a month longer, consistent to the last in fidelity to what we lightly name "the highest ideals." With Philip Sidney they were vital principles.

His wife was with him, and his brother Robert. At noon of his last day on earth, he summoned his failing powers to assuage the irrepressible grief of his brother.

"Love my memory, cherish my friends," he said, adding: "Above all, govern your will by the Will of your Creator. In me behold the end of this World and all her vanities."

To quote again from the record of the eyewitness of his latest and greatest victory:

"A little later in the day, his friends asked him for a fresh token of his confidence in God's mercy. He could not speak, but straightway raised both his hands, and placed them together on his breast, and held them there in the attitude of prayer. After a few minutes more he had ceased to breathe."

PENSHURST PLACE, KENT, AS SEEN FROM THE GARDEN

The statue is of later date than the period of the biography

V

AMONG HISTORIC CHATEAUX

V

AMONG HISTORIC CHATEAUX

WE have had a golden—a royal—a riotous—or whatever other perfervid adjective may convey the right impression of the sustained ecstasy of six days passed among the historic chateaux of Old Touraine.

One of our company avers that she will go mourning all the rest of her days because this—the crown of a foreign "run"—was delayed until now, for a globe-trotter who has crossed the Atlantic ten times. The rest are blissfully content that the sparkling draught has the added zest of novelty.

Leaving the railway at Blois, we were so fortunate as to secure, for the thoroughfares and by-ways marked in our itine-

rary, a comfortable motor-car (nobody calls it an "automobile" over here) and a chauffeur incomparable for intelligence and respectful complaisance.

The chateau of Blois is a modern miracle of restoration. The minutest details of decoration are identical with those that greeted the eyes of Catherine de' Medici, Francis I., and three of the Louises. The window through which Marie d' Medici was lowered into the arms of rescuers awaiting her escape on the terrace below—a feat attended by the greater peril on account of her substantial personality—remains just as it was on that night memorable for the captive queen and the kingdom.

We stood at the side-door of the council-chamber, a secluded *coign d'avantage*, from which the chief of the assassins watched his unsuspecting quarry, the mightiest and the most arrogant man in the realm—the Duke of Guise—warming his graceful limbs at the hearth of the inner hall, exchanging morning salu-

THE EMBLEM OF FRANCIS I.—CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS

From a photograph by Levy

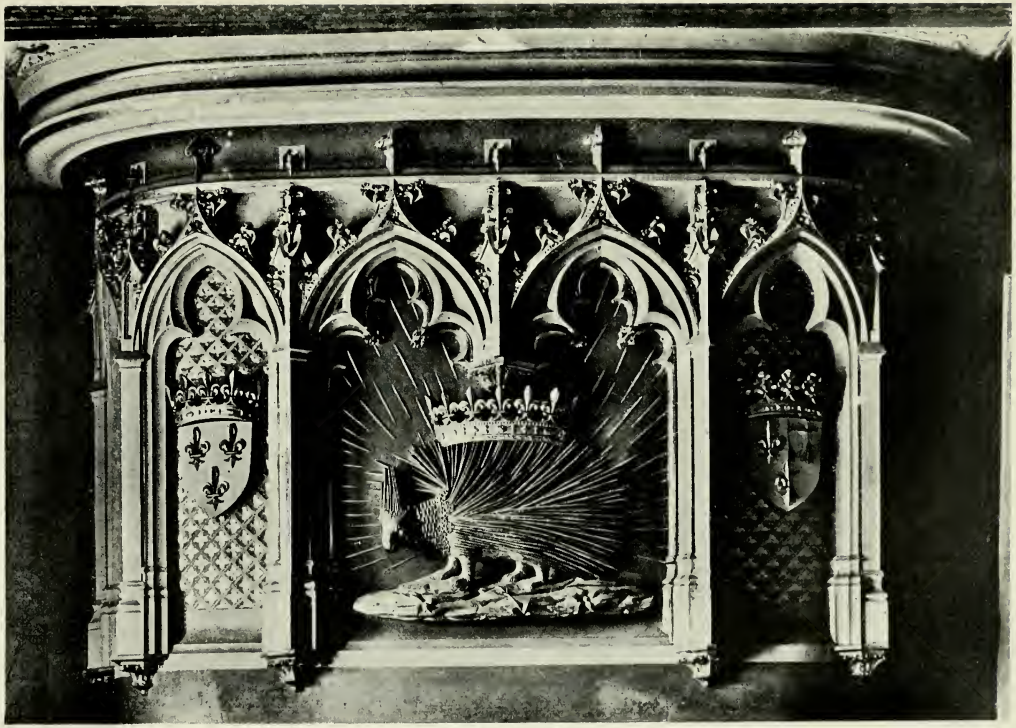
tations with his fellow-councillors, and munching the dried and candied plums which were then, as now, a favourite sweetmeat of the region. When he had satisfied his fancy for fruit and gossip, he tossed a handful of plums on the table, pocketed the bonbonnière from which he had taken them, and sauntered with easy insolence into the passage leading to the chamber of the King, who had summoned him from his bed an hour ago. He was not the first monarch who had been forced to await the ducal convenience. We followed him along the winding way—fancying we could see what he did not—the shadowy forms of conspirators lurking in corners still murky with night shadows. We stood on the very spot where, riddled with stabs, and panting from the desperate wrestle with the hired murderers, he lay, with his hand upon the very curtains of the royal couch, breathing his last, but alive enough to feel the heel of Henry Third in his face. Was he so far conscious as to

recall, in that honest hour, that he had thus spurned the dying Coligny on the night of St. Bartholomew's?

Magnificent Blois—first for beauty and in historic interest, is thronged with ghosts. The heraldic porcupine of Louis II., the salamander of Francis I. and the ermine of Anne of Bretagne must look down from the frescoed panels upon rare convocations, when midnight leaves the great chambers void of bodily visitors.

Amboise on the Loire is yet more densely populated by sad and fearsome wraiths. Of it, and of them, I shall speak in a future chapter. We were there yesterday. On other golden days, fair as summer weather in Touraine could make them, we saw Chenonceaux, Chambord, Langeais, and the pearl of the French Renaissance, the most admired by the artistic tourist—Azay-le-Rideau.

The catalogue has nought to do with that which has brought us to the one chateau which is an irreparable and



THE EMBLEM OF LOUIS XII.

From a photograph by Neurdein

confessed ruin—"the relic of feudal strength, known as Chinon."

Our chauffeur unwittingly sounded the key-note of the *opus* that now engages our every thought and sense.

The high-road over which we glided, as a swallow flies, is lined, for miles of its length, with a broad border of heather so exactly like the purple swathings we saw in Scotland last month, that we exclaimed at the coincidence. While we were admiring it, the man said, incidentally:

"It was along this road that Jeanne d' Arc led her army from Chinon to Blois."

Our youths had *Quentin Durward* fresh in their memories. The same thought occurred to two of them and they uttered it in one breath:

"Why may not the Scottish archers of Louis Eleventh have brought the heather with them?"

"Rootlets—or maybe seeds—don't you know?" one elaborated the suggestion. "Once rooted, it would live forever."

It matters little to us when and how the Scotch heather was transplanted into the soil to which it takes so kindly. The Scottish archers were a marked feature of the French army for a long time before the accession of Marie Stuart's son to the English throne ended the feuds between the two adjacent kingdoms. The broad thoroughfare winding through the fertile valley of the Loire may, or may not have worn its hem of royal purple when the Maid of Domrémy —soon and forever after to be known as the "Maid of Orleans"—rode at the head of the army hurried together at her request by King and Council, through dale and plain, to the fortified city held by the victorious invaders.

I borrow here from a graphic summary of the condition of France at this period, given by the accomplished author of *Old Touraine*, which fascinating work we made our own at Tours early in our pilgrimage.

"The English had run a wedge into the

THE STATUE OF JEANNE D'ARC IN PARIS

Fremiet, designer. From a photograph by Neurdein

very heart of France from the sea-coast to Paris, and to this lazy, kindly, good-looking Charles VII. was left the task of turning them out. His defeats at the first were so numerous that he was nicknamed 'Le Roi de Bourges': the misery of France went on unabated. The state of the people at this time was frightful: wolves were fighting for the corpses of the dead in the churches of Paris; churches were sacked; castles burned to the ground; the lands were left untilled."

"In her march from Chinon,"—then one of the strongest castles left to the "lazy, kindly, good-looking" King. He had grave councillors about him there, but they were agreed upon nothing except that the state of the kingdom was desperate, and that Charles could not be aroused to any valiant enterprise to better it. For, nearer to the royal person was the cordon of parasites that battened upon the public money and encouraged the monarch in extravagant vices.

His latest *grande passion*, the fair and frail Aloyse de Castelnau, haughty as she was beautiful, held him in thrall to the exclusion of any thought of his people's sufferings, or the nation's weal. "Let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die!" may have been the motto of lazy, voluptuous king and parasitic courtiers, but the morrow was not yet upon them. Chinon had "a position of almost unique strength and safety." The moat surrounding it on the landward side is dry now, but we trace still the supports of the massive drawbridge, worked in feudal times from the interior—a thick-walled room that defied assault. Three castles as massive guarded the walls.

"It is easy to people Blois with the gallants of Henry Third's court, or the intrigues of Louis Fourteenth; Chenonceaux tells its own light, uneventful story in every ripple of reflected sunbeam upon its graceful windows; but Chinon, greater in extent than all of them,

a very wilderness of towers and battlements—Chinon is in ruins irretrievably."

Yet to us it is more interesting than "all of them." There is no professional guide on duty this noon. We rejoice and are exceeding glad in the liberty of strolling across the ragged herbage, picking our way among the fallen masonry projecting from the earth on every side; leaning over the outer wall to survey the glorious view of river, hill, and valley —"watered as the garden of the Lord"— the grey walls of the little town that is coeval with a castle built by the Romans, and rebuilt by Gaul and Plantagenet. The town in which Rabelais was born and lived and wrote. We saw his statue as we passed through the crooked street.

There were notable tragedies within the august ruin now given over to owls, bats, ghosts, and tourists who have read French history. Tragedies that preceded the generation of her for whose dear sake we are lingering among stones that might be tombs. Henry II. of England fled

hither before the French King, Henry's own son, Richard, fainting upon the drawbridge and dying a day or two later.

"That night his Chancellor was reading to him the list of the rebels. 'Sire,' said he, 'may Jesus Christ help me! the first name which is written here is the name of Count John, your son!' Then Henry turned his face to the wall, caring no more for himself, or for the world."

For Count John was his favourite son, and until then he had not suspected his perfidy.

While we recall the tale, we glance upward, in a sort of subconscious cerebration, trying to locate the possible scene of the death-chamber, and our eyes are arrested by a tablet on the ruined wall above where we are sitting.

"The chimney," thus runs the translation—"of the chamber in which Jeanne d' Arc recognised Charles VII."

The room itself has been torn down, or has sunk of its own weight, under the storms of more than four hundred years.

Gone, too, is the staircase by which the Peasant Maid of Domrémy was conducted into the presence of her sovereign. She had come one hundred and fifty miles to secure the interview. I abridge the story she told before the court that, two years thereafter, tried and condemned her for heresy.

"When I was at home with my father, I employed myself with the ordinary cares of the house. I learned to spin and to sew. In sewing and in spinning I fear no woman in Rouen."

(The trial was in Rouen, and here public feeling ran high against her "unwomanliness.")

"I was thirteen when I had a voice from God for my help and guidance. The first time that I heard this Voice I was very much frightened. It was mid-day in the summer in my father's garden. I had not fasted the day before, I heard this Voice on my right, toward the Church. When I heard it for the third time, I recognised that it was the Voice

of an Angel. It told me it was necessary for me to come into France. It said to me two or three times a week, 'You must go into France!' My father knew nothing of my going. The Voice said to me, 'Go into France!' I could stay no longer. It said to me: 'Go! raise the siege which is being made before the city of Orleans. Go,' it added, 'to Robert de Baudricourt, Captain of Vaucouleurs. He will furnish you with an escort to accompany you.' And I replied that I was a poor girl, who knew nothing of riding or fighting. I went to my uncle, and told him I wished to be near him for a time. I remained there eight days. I said to him, 'I must go to Vaucouleurs!' He took me there. I recognised Robert de Baudricourt, although I had never seen him before. I knew him, thanks to my Voice, which made me recognise him. I said to Robert, 'I must go into France.' Twice Robert refused to hear me, and repulsed me. The third time he received me, and

furnished me with men. The Voice had told me it would be thus."

The nobleman here spoken of as "Robert de Baudricourt," committed her to the safe conduct of a knight whom he could trust and sent her forward to the King—then the Dauphin, never having been crowned. This knight, Jean de Metz, described his first interview with the "Maid" in a deposition made under oath after her death:

"I saw her dressed in a red dress, poor and worn. . . . She said: 'Before the middle of Lent, I must be with the King—even if I have to wear down my feet to the knees! No one in the world—neither kings, nor dukes, nor the daughter of the King of Scotland' (Margaret Stuart, then betrothed to Louis, afterward Louis XI) 'nor any others—can recover the kingdom of France. There is no succour to be expected but from me. I would rather spin with my poor mother—for this is not my proper estate. It is, however, necessary that I should go and

do this, because my Lord wills that I should do it.'"

De Metz and his squire relate that, influenced by their representations of the dangers to which a young woman would be subjected, journeying through the country in the unsettled state of the nation, she consented to assume the habiliments of a man. The squire, Bertrand de Poulengey, a youth of noble birth, testified:

"Jean de Metz and I, aided by many others of Vaucouleurs, so wrought upon her that she put off her woman's dress, which was of a red colour. We procured for her a tunic and man's dress—spurs, leggings, sword, and such like—and a horse. . . . Fearing to be taken by the Burgundians and the English, we travelled all night. . . . We were eleven days on the road, during which we had many anxieties. But Jeanne told us always that we had nothing to fear and that, once arrived at Chinon, the noble Dauphin would show us good counte-

nance. I felt myself inspired by her words, for I saw she was indeed a messenger of God. Never did I see in her any evil, but always she was as good as if she had been a saint."

The noble Dauphin declined to show her any "countenance" whatsoever, for some time. She reached Chinon on the evening of March 6, 1428, and took lodgings in the house of a respectable woman in the town.

Jean de Metz entered the Castle and made his report to the authorities there. He pressed her cause warmly with the subalterns with whom she was allowed to confer.

"I had absolute faith in her,"—thus he sums up the results of that eleven days' acquaintance with the strange visitor to the royal chateau. "Her words and her ardent faith in God inflamed me. . . . While we were with her, we found her always good, simple, pious, an excellent Christian, well behaved, and God-fearing."

His representations had no apparent effect upon the dissolute Dauphin, if indeed court-yard and barrack gossip ever reached him. It was not until his kinsman, the Count of Dunois, best known in history as "the Bastard of Orleans," who was then in command of the beleaguered town of Orleans—hearing a rumour that "a young girl, commonly called 'the Maid,' had passed through Gien, going to the noble Dauphin, with the avowed intention of raising the siege of Orleans and conducting the Dauphin to Rheims for his anointing,"—sent messengers to Charles for "better information on the subject of the young girl," that the lover of Aloyse de Castelnau condescended to hearken to the tale that had set the tongues of courtiers and peasants to buzzing. The ambassadors of Dunois brought back word to him that "the King at first had no wish to listen to her. She even remained two days waiting until she was permitted to present herself before him."

From other sources we learn what the manner of that presentation was, in the chamber that covered the ground where we now stand, looking up at the remains of the great "cheminée," about which the gay company assembled on that March day almost five hundred years agone.

For gay it was, the Dauphin having sounded the key-note. He withdrew himself to an obscure corner of the hall, setting one of his nobles in the place of honour, to personate him and test the powers of divination attributed to the mysterious "Maid." We can easily picture the scene:—the laughing, sneering faces of the richly apparelled men and women, courtiers and courtesans alike curious to witness the little masquerade which promised diversion from the stupid country life forced upon them by the tiresome war. We may guess what rude titters shook the bosoms of the King's favourite and her bower-women as the quaint figure of the peasant entered at the lower end of the presence-chamber.

VI

JOAN OF ARC AT CHINON

VI

JOAN OF ARC AT CHINON

WHAT was the personal appearance of the prodigy that had won her way into the royal presence?

Mr. Andrew Lang, her latest and most careful biographer, writes:

"There is no portrait of her. She never sat to a painter; and the popular images, whether from memory or fancy, are mainly late or apocryphal.

"Her health was perfect; her energy was proved to be indefatigable. Her courtly manner of address and salutation she seemed to have learned from her crowned and gracious lady-saints. She loved a good horse, a good knight, and a good sword, and she loved to go richly clad.

"But when the Maid appeared at last before her 'gentle Dauphin,' she wore a black 'pourpoint'; a kind of breeches fastened by laces and points to the 'pourpoint'; a short, coarse, dark grey tunic, and a black cap on her close cropped black hair. Probably she rode out of Vaucouleurs in the same raiment."

He tells, too, that she was tall, and quotes from a letter written by a young knight to his mother that she "seemed a thing all divine."

"From other witnesses," says Mr. Lang, "we learn that she was 'beautiful in face and figure,' and that 'her face was glad and smiling.'"

It wore no smile on the momentous occasion we are describing.

One gallant gentleman, who had defended Harfleur against Henry V., and afterward aided Dunois to gain the victory of Montargis—the Sieur de Gaucourt—marked with pitying eyes her passage up the long room. Without a moment's hesitation, she went straight

to the man half hidden by those who stood about him and who made way, instinctively, as she neared him.

I make use, gratefully and respectfully, of the deposition of the Sieur de Gaucourt.

> The bravest are the tenderest;
> The loving are the daring.

"I was at the Castle of the town of Chinon when Jeanne arrived there, and I saw her when she presented herself before the King's Majesty with great lowliness and simplicity—a poor little shepherdess! I heard her say these words:

"'Most noble Lord Dauphin! I am come and am sent to you from God to give succour to the kingdom and to you."

I do not envy the self-control of the reader whose throat does not ache from the heart-swell caused by the simple narrative. "A poor little shepherdess!"

The phrase escaped him without conscious volition in the formal "Deposition at Orleans," dated 1455, twenty-four

years after the ashes of Jeanne d'Arc, together with her heart—"which remained whole and bleeding"—were cast, like foul offal, into the Seine.

We go on with the evidence of our brave and tender soldier:

"After having seen and heard her, the King, so as to be better instructed about her, put her under the protection of Guillaume Bellier, his Major-Domo, my Lieutenant at Chinon, whose wife was most devout and of the best reputation. Then he had her visited by the Clergy, by Doctors and by Prelates, to know if he could lawfully put faith in her. Her deeds and words were examined during three weeks, not only at Chinon, but at Poitiers. The Examinations finished, the Clergy decided that there was nothing evil in her deeds, nor in her words. After numerous interrogations, they ended by asking her what sign she could furnish that her words might be believed.

"'The sign I have to show,' she replied, 'is to raise the siege of Orleans.'"

Lodgings were assigned her during the three weeks' ordeal in the Tower of Coudray. We walk across the court-yard and pick our way between the débris of wall and buttress and coping, to the base of the tower. The staircase by which it was entered ran on the outside. It is gone, but the rest of the building is sound. From the slits of windows set in the ponderous walls, the Maid must have had a superb view of the fairest portions of the France she loved with heroic passion. We hope that the wife of de Gaucourt's trusted lieutenant was gentle as well as devout, and that she "mothered" the little shepherdess when, wearied by disputations and cate-chisings, she sought her chamber for repose.

We know that she spent much time in the chapel attached to the Castle, kneeling there long in prayer, often weeping as she prayed. She confessed daily and was diligent in the practice of every religious duty. One of the Order of Her-

mit Friars of Saint Augustin came from Tours to Chinon, expressly to see and examine her. After hearing her confession at her request, he tells us that he "always followed her from that day onward, and was with her as her chaplain until she was taken prisoner at Compiègne."

From his sworn deposition before the Committee of Inquiry, we gather other incidents of her sojourn at Chinon. The three weeks of clerical and ecclesiastical examination were at an end.

"The Bishops had come to the conclusion that, in view of the necessity that weighed upon the Kingdom, the King might make use of her aid, and that they had found nothing in her contrary to the Catholic Faith. . . . She then returned to Chinon, and thought she would be allowed to speak with the King, but it was not yet to be. At last, by the advice of the Council she was permitted an interview with the King, The day on which this interview was to take place,

CHÂTEAU OF CHINON, THE RUINS OF THE THRONE ROOM WHERE JEANNE D'ARC RECOGNISED CHARLES XII.

From a photograph by Lévy

just as she entered the Castle, a man, mounted on horseback, said, 'Is that the Maid?'

"He insulted her and swore with horrid blasphemy.

"'Oh! in God's Name,' she said to him, 'dost thou blaspheme God, who art so near thy death?'

"And, an hour after, this man fell into the water and was drowned."

The anecdote is interesting to us chiefly as it offers another proof of what excited the wonder of her contemporaries. Women swore as lustily as men in that liberal age. The squire who escorted Jeanne to Chinon leaves the main track of his narrative to interject, "She entirely abstained from swearing." The Duke d' Alençon, as profane as he was profligate, volunteers a tribute to her hatred of unchaste conduct and of looseness of speech.

"She was very vexed when she heard any of the soldiers swear. She reproved me much and strongly when I sometimes

swore, and when I was with her I refrained from swearing."

He fought at her side at Jargeau, where the army under her command was victorious against a force greatly superior in numbers. On the eve of another fight news was brought to the French which, the Duke says, "much troubled Jeanne, the other captains and myself." He adds that the "other captains" were guided by Jeanne's advice in the ensuing engagement.

"Without great difficulty the English were beaten and slain, and Talbot made prisoner. There was a great slaughter."

He was a valiant fighter himself, and his testimony to her military genius is worth recording:

"She had, she said, four duties to accomplish: to beat the English; to have the King crowned and consecrated at Rheims; to deliver the Duke d'Orleans from the hands of the English; and to raise the siege of Orleans.

"In all she did, except in affairs of war, she was a very simple young girl; but for warlike things—bearing the lance, assembling an army, ordering military operations, directing artillery—she was most skilful. Every one wondered that she could act with as much wisdom and foresight as a captain who had fought for twenty or thirty years. It was above all in making use of artillery that she was so wonderful."

We are standing by the broken parapet, surveying the panorama of river, plain, hill, and town, when a solution of her military success is offered.

"It was a superstitious age," says the grave youth. "The apparition of the armed Maid, flaunting her consecrated banner, was a direct promise from Heaven to the French, a portent of dread to the equally superstitious English. The one army attacked with confidence in divine assistance. It was like 'the going in the top of the mulberry trees' to the people chosen by God to rout the Philistines.

The English fled—a disorderly, panic-stricken rabble."

The hypothesis is hundreds of years older than he who now enunciates it. Instead of crushing him with the truism, one reads aloud from a volume opened upon the shattered coping of the wall. In the preface to a compilation of the "Original Documents" of the trial, the condemnation, the execution, and the tardy rehabilitation by Church, State, and Public Opinion, of the martyred patriot, the able editor, Mr. T. Douglas Murray, writes words of weight that silence our callow critic:

"While we must give due weight and consideration to the age in which this marvel showed itself on the stage of history—an age of portents and prophecies, of thaumaturgists and saints—yet, when all allowance is made, there remains this sane, strong, solid girl, leaving her humble home, and in two short months accomplishing more than Cæsar or Alexander accomplished in so much time, and at

an age when even Alexander had, as yet, accomplished nothing."

There is the truth in a nut-shell. The reports of military triumphs we read in the life of the Peasant Girl of Domrémy are not bombastic fiction, the folk-lore of her congeners transmitted to us by tradition, and gathering volume with each rolling century.

Eye-witnesses who related in detail the history of siege, repulse, strategy, and victory, were men-of-arms from their youth up. The flower of the English army, led by doughty Bedford, was made apparently invincible by alliance with the warlike Duke of Burgundy. The prestige of repeated victories was with the invaders. The disheartenment of a series of defeats had weakened the arms and spirits of the French. With the suddenness of a change in the setting of a stage, the situations were reversed. Orleans was saved: there was an incredible triumph of the arms of France at Patay; Troyes, another stronghold, was captured

after a desperate resistance, and the "Miraculous Maid" stood in the Cathedral of Rheims, the banner, that had become an oriflamme to her followers, in her hand, and saw the fulfilment of her fourth desire—the coronation that made the Dauphin King of France.

What schoolboy is not familiar with the incidents of that day of sublime fruition? We recall, as if we had seen it, her paroxysm of womanly weeping, as, throwing herself at her monarch's feet, she begged to be allowed to return to her humble home, now that her mission was accomplished. When Charles would none of this, how she pleaded, as for life and honour, declaring that she had no warrant for continuing at court or in the army. The Voices were silent with regard to what was to succeed the coronation. We know, too, what followed her obedience to the royal mandate.

It was all over in three months: her introduction to Charles; his ungracious acceptance of her aid and grant of men

and arms; the brief, dazzling campaign; the vicissitudes that came after the coronation; the rout and capture at Compiègne; the unspeakable infamy of the betrayal into the hands of Burgundians and British; the mockery of a sort of combination military and ecclesiastical trial at Rouen.

She was brought on February 21st for the first time before the tribunal, consisting of "the Bishop and forty-two Assessors." She was burned at the stake on the thirtieth of May. English soldiers were her jailors all those months; she was chained to her iron bed at night, and wore irons by day. The "examinations" at Chinon, preparatory to her military career, were child's play compared with the "procès verbal" at the tongue of bishops and canons, urged to the hellish work by Bedford's gold.

"I wish she had not recanted!" a tremulous voice breaks a painful silence.

So does the world that now does justice to the purity of her motives and life.

Yet—three months of prison—and such a prison! the cruel badgering of the learned and reverend inquisitors, day after day; the utter isolation from all friendly companionship; the vile insults of the brutes who never left her out of their sight by day or night;—who, of mortal mould, would not have grasped at the chance of release at any and all cost? And what was her recantation? Merely—reduced to a few words—that perchance she might have been mistaken in thinking that she heard "the Voices"; that she resigned her will and her beliefs to the control of the Holy Church in which she had been baptised, and which she had held as sacredly infallible all her young life.

And she was but nineteen!

It was a foregone conclusion with those who knew ecclesiastics and Burgundians —leaving the English out of the count— that no form of recantation could save her life. None of us need to refresh our memories of the shameful trick that

caused her to break her word not to resume the man's dress she had worn all of her prison-life. She had defended her action in this respect in simple language: "It seemed best, inasmuch as she had no associates other than men."

She sealed her doom the noon in which she put on the only garments left her by the grinning guards.

With what patience fierce indignation has spared to us, we go over the terms of one count of the indictment read to her early in the trial:

"Jeanne attributes to God, His angels and His saints orders which are against the modesty of the sex, and which are prohibited by the Divine Law: things abominable to God and to man: interdicted on pain of anathema by ecclesiastical censure, such as dressing herself in the garments of a man—short, tight, dissolute—those underneath, as well as above. It is in virtue of these pretended orders that she hath attired herself in sumptuous and stately garments, cloth-

of-gold and furs; and not only did she wear short tunics, but she dressed herself in tabards and garments open on both sides. . . .

"She was always seen with a cap on her head, her hair cut short and around in the style of a man. In one word, putting aside the modesty of her sex, she acted not only against all feminine decency, but even against the reserve which beseems men of good morals, wearing ornaments which profligate men are wont to use, and going so far as to carry arms of offence.

"To attribute this to the order of God, to the order which had been transmitted to her by the Angels, and even by Virgin Saints, is to blaspheme God and His Saints, to destroy the Divine Law and violate the Canonical Rules. It is to libel the sex and its virtue, to overturn all decency, to justify all examples of dissolute living, and to drive others thereto."

This amazing fusillade was the pream-

ble to the direct question, "What have you to say to this Article?"

The prisoner—poor little shepherdess! —wan with sleepless nights in the fetid air of her cell, worn to emaciation by the awful strain of the long-drawn-out torture to nerves and sensibilities, to which she had been subjected for weeks—made meek reply:

"I have not blasphemed God nor His saints!"

She could say nothing else, even had her dazed senses taken in the meaning of the jargon.

She was not allowed to partake of the Holy Communion while she wore doublet and hose, although she had "communicated" repeatedly while fighting the battles of ungrateful France and her dastardly King. Under sacerdotal pressure, she put on the gown and cap provided for her, and went to Mass in the escort of her jailors.

The solemn balderdash droned into her ears, in a day when the French Court

was notorious for the grossest profligacy —a byword and a hissing among nations whose code of morals was far below the standard recognised by the twentieth century—would be irresistibly amusing were it not that the "count" was part of a snare set for an innocent woman. The trap fell when she was compelled to assume the garb "interdicted on pain of anathema by ecclesiastical censure."

Bedford and Burgundy paid handsomely for the crowning stroke of treachery.

Twenty-four years thereafter, a priest and notary public testified to the exhibition of the Maid in man's dress to himself and other officials summoned to the Castle prison for that purpose. This was on Sunday.

"On the following Wednesday, Jeanne was taken to the Old Market of Rouen, where a sermon was preached upon the Sentence of Relapse pronounced by the Bishop of Beauvais. After this sentence was read, she was taken by the civil

authorities, and, without further trial or sentence, was led to the executioner to be burnt. . . ."

A gleam of savage satisfaction lights our eyes in reading the rest of the honest man's affidavit:

"And I know, of a truth, that the Judges and their adherents were henceforward notorious to the population. After Jeanne was burnt they were pointed at by the people and hated; and I have heard it maintained that all who were guilty of her death came to a shameful end. Maitre Nicolas Midi" (who preached the funeral sermon) "died of leprosy a few days later, and the Bishop died suddenly while he was being shaved."

The court before which these and similar depositions were made, in 1455–6 revoked the sentence of excommunication, declaring that the "said Jeanne and her relatives have not, on account of the said trial, contracted nor incurred any mark or stigma of infamy."

We have seen the "handsome cross" set up in the market-place of Rouen, "for the perpetual memory of the Deceased, and for her salvation!"

"It should have been *here*!" we pronounce, closing the tome with emphasis. "At Chinon, majestic in her ruin, memorable for ever as the birthplace of the Maid's marvellous enterprise."

Castle and fortifications fell into melancholy decay through the contemptuous indifference of Richelieu, into whose hands Chinon lapsed early in the seventeenth century.

"The old Castle only bored him, and was designedly left to ruin and decay."

The arrogant Cardinal has no place in our thoughts while we have our dream out, sitting in the shadow of the Tower of Coudray, tracing with loving eyes the indentations in the wall that show where wound the stairway by which Jeanne ascended to her eyrie overlooking the Valley of the Loire.

VII

JOSEPHINE AT MALMAISON

VII

JOSEPHINE AT MALMAISON

THE car had drawn up suddenly to the sidewalk of the village street.

"The Church, mesdames and messieurs!" announced the chauffeur.

The little town of Rueil is so like a hundred other French villages that we had hardly glanced from the windows at the rows of white stuccoed cottages and shops planted flush with the roadway. We were in front of a grey and time-bitten church, modest in architecture, sitting so contentedly among cottages and shops that we would have passed it without thought or query.

We entered. The place was empty of living creatures except ourselves. Our reverent footsteps awoke echoes up and

down the aisles. By a common and mute impulse, we walked directly to the white figure in the recess at the left of the altar. She is kneeling upon her sarcophagus in her imperial robes; the beautiful head is bowed toward the prayer-book open on the *prie-dieu* before her. The statue is exquisite in design and in execution. In the dim, religious light of the old sanctuary, the perfection of the pose is startlingly lifelike. There are sweet serenity and a certain proud humility in face and attitude, yet the whole is informed with the majesty of the queen. So she might have looked in her coronation garments when she bent her head in Notre Dame to receive the crown the imperious boor, her husband, snatched from the hands of the Pope and set, first upon his own head, then upon his wife's.

À
JOSEPHINE
EUGÈNE ET HORTENSE
1825

A VIEW IN THE GROUNDS OF CHÂTEAU MALMAISON

The tomb bears no other epitaph. Eleven years after her death her children raised the monument to her memory. By contrast with the noble simplicity of the memorial, the group which occupies the niche on the opposite side of the church is overwrought into extravagant straining after effect.

À LA REINE HORTENSE
SON FILS
NAPOLEON III

The inscription goes well with the flying angel whose floating robes graze the shoulders of the kneeling form beneath her. The latter wears a coronet, and may, or may not be meant for the Queen of Holland.

Five minutes later we alight at the gates of Malmaison.

A broad sweep of gravelled walk leads between straight flower-beds to the prim stateliness of a French chateau. Three rows of nine rectangular windows are

set in the front of the main building. Wings as geometrically severe, with six windows on the left fronting half a dozen on the right, project from the central façade. The wings are capped by pyramidal roofs. There is sharp incongruity in the recognition, as we stroll up the sandy walk, of two long-time favourites that have meant much of historical romance to our simple minds. The "Souvenir de Malmaison" and the "Empress Eugénie" are roses better known in America than here. They look lonely in the rectilinear, perfectly-tended borders, flanked by shorn turf, and punctuated by box-trees which might have been pruned with an automatic razor.

Josephine was an ardent botanist. During her occupancy of the country-house presented by the enamoured husband in the earlier years of their wedded life, her passion for gardening gained for her some of the happiest days of a checkered life. Naturally lavish with money where the gratification of her

taste or fantasies was involved, she set no bounds to her wishes in stocking grounds and greenhouses that had international celebrity. She levied upon every land that could supply rare exotics. In memory of the tropical glories of gardens among which her childhood was passed, she imported cargoes of shrubs and blossons from Martinique. Holland was ransacked for the finest tulips that home of the costly bulb could afford.

Once, when the Emperor summoned her to join him in a triumphal "progress," she was found on her knees among the budding tulips, weeping stormily.

"It is now two years since I have seen you bloom! Bonaparte always calls me away at this season!"

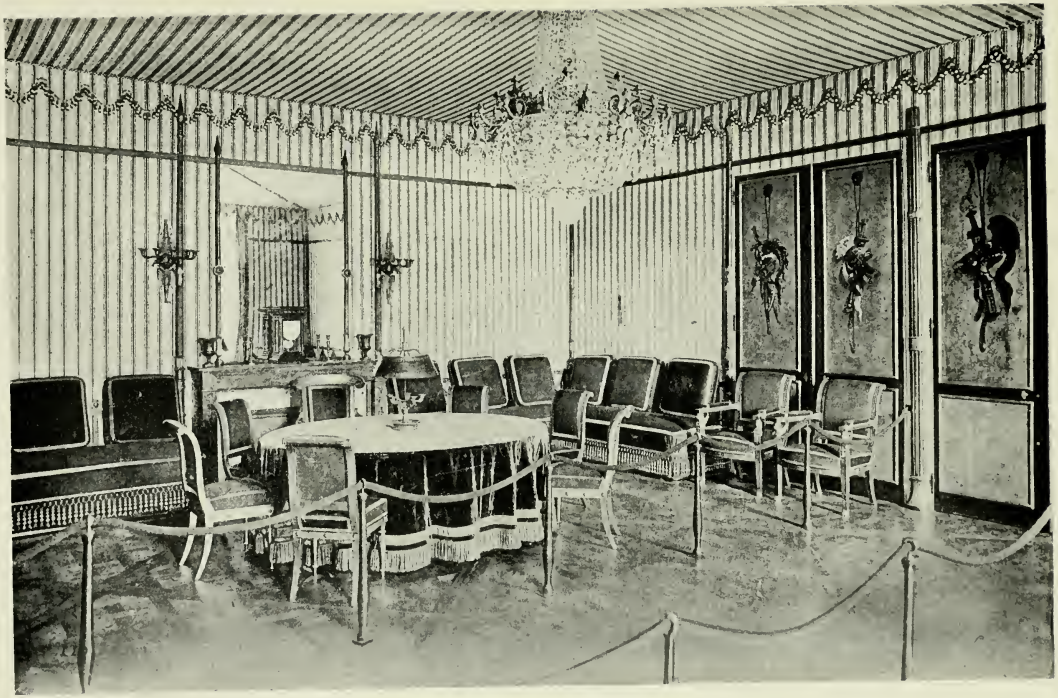
Three years after the marriage, the newly-created First Consul bought the old house to which his wife had taken a violent fancy.

"At which time," says an official document we were reading last night, preparatory to our pilgrimage of to-day, "the

architect was asked to prepare an unpretentious residence, simple and commodious, appropriate to the manners of the time, for General Bonaparte, who gave, after immortal victories, peace and laws to France. . . . It was, above all, for him a home of rest, the Tibur of happy years, where, first as General, then as First Consul of the Republic, he came to break away from the anxiety of state affairs, from the ninth of one decade to the first of the next, at the end of those long weeks of ten days which were filled with such terrible events. . . .

"But for the Great Public, the spectre of the Past which haunts the Chateau is the spectre of a woman. It is the Trianon of Josephine, happily saved, which many will come to see, as they come to Versailles to see the Trianon of Marie Antoinette."

From this same paper we learned that Malmaison is now, for the first time in this generation, open to sight-seers, moved by curiosity or by reverence for the names of those who made the Cha-



COUNCIL CHAMBER, CHÂTEAU MALMAISON

From a photograph by Neurdein

teau famous. With infinite patience, and moved by what he esteemed a high and holy purpose, the purchaser of the domain restored a mere ruin to a fair semblance of what it was over a century ago. All the furniture and decorations that could be gathered from museums and government lumber-rooms, were collected and set in their old places; broken ceilings were put up again, fragment by fragment; mahogany woodwork was cleaned of the green paint that disfigured it.

When his work was done the munificent owner presented Malmaison to the state.

"He had thought of making an endowment of one million francs to organise a Napoleonic museum at the chateau. He died before executing the project."

We do not regret the failure of the project in roaming through the scantily furnished rooms. We are here to see Josephine's home, not a collection of war trophies. For a full half-hour after we are taken into honourable custody by a

handsome and courteous guard in uniform, we are surfeited by Napoleonic relics.

The be-stuccoed and columned "vestibule" (*Salle des Gardes*) has but one antique feature. The tessellated black-and-white pavement was laid during the First Empire. So was that of the adjoining dining-room. The spick-and-spanness that chilled us at first sight of the Chateau is over all—a sort of ghastly glaze that means restoration, not the renaissance we had hoped to find.

We push forward impatiently, pausing a little longer in the council-room, "reconstituted in a correct and exact style." Thus our good-looking guide informs us. The hall is built in the shape of a tent, and hung with white-and-blue duck curtains.

Library and billiard-rooms come next, and we are still so out of tune with what we had meant and hoped to feel that we laugh outright at the story recalled by the Irrepressible of our party, that the allied soldiers who overran Malmaison in

1815, cut away the green cloth from the billiard-table and made breeches of it.

At last!

For this is the drawing-room of the First Consul's wife, the Empress, the divorced and deserted woman who loved Malmaison and hated the Tuileries, who died somewhere under the rambling roofs. Her bust—a tawdry conception, although well executed—is on the mantel, which was a gift to her from the Pontiff whom the inperial boor haled all the way from Rome to crown him, winding up the stupendous farce by taking the function into his own stumpy hands. Glitter and glaze follow us thither. Flambeaux in bronze and gilt; Etruscan pottery; settees; chairs; stools; tables; fancy baskets in Sevres—in formal array—are railed away from the vulgar touch by gilded ropes supported by bronze rods.

In a far corner we espy a tea-table, with a couple of chairs standing cozily close to it at a conversational angle, and not far away, as if the owner had pushed

it aside to pour out a cup of tea for her one guest and herself, "the embroidery-frame and work-table of the Empress."

We have not waited for the sentence from the guide's mouth. As at the pressure of an electric button, there comes back to us the little story that has more pathos than comedy in it, of how Josephine played at embroidery as Marie Antoinette at butter-making. The First Consul had his fits of longing for *bourgeois* domesticity. He liked to "make-believe" that he had married a woman who excelled in home duties as well as in social arts. Napoleon's mother —overbearing "Madame Mère"—was a famous needlewoman. Josephine's own daughter, Hortense, was a pleasing musician, composing both the words and music of "Partant pour la Syrie." Josephine, having neither of these accomplishments, was yet resolved not to suffer in her husband's eyes for want of them. The tale goes that she feigned cleverly to ply the needle at such odd hours as the great

man could give her. In another room we see presently what is catalogued as "A magnificent fire-screen, supposed to have been embroidered by Josephine, though it might possibly be the work of the pupils of Saint Cyr."

The tradition to which we refer asserts that the "pupils" wrought the design—a spray or cluster, or a bit of plumage, or a section of the urn—from day to day, at the order of the Empress, returning the frame to her, between times, to figure in the pretty domestic scene. I do not vouch for the authenticity of the story, but it gathers probability from another which is given by more than one historian. I find it confirmed by a foot-note in the printed guide-book to Malmaison:

"Josephine, as she did not embroider, played but little music. She knew but one air, learned with difficulty—and that was why she always played the same."

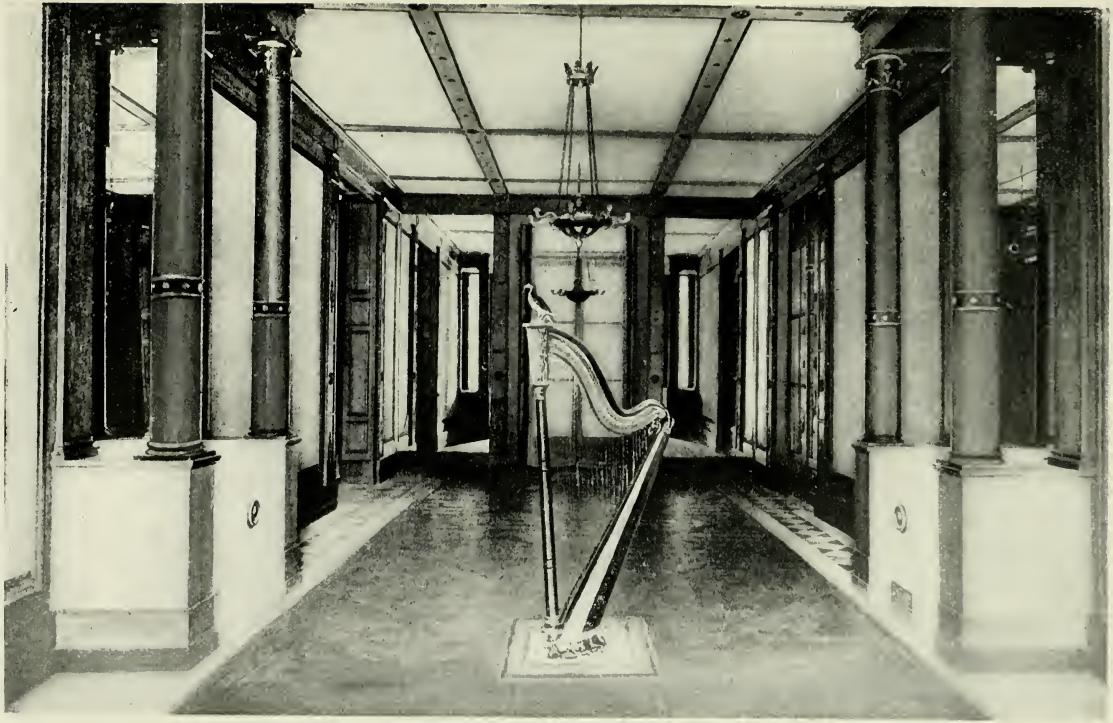
The harp, upon which she played her one poor little "piece," is in the concert room. It is the wreck of a superb

instrument, mahogany, decorated with gilded bees and other conceits, interspersed with gilded "J's" wherever they can find room. The Napoleonic eagle flutters half-furled wings on the top.

Three tattered strings hang loose within the frame. They tell the whole story of desolate uselessness. We wish we knew what was the solitary melody she coaxed from the strings, when all were in place and tuned for the performance by other hands than hers.

We mount a short flight of stairs and pass into the private apartments of "the Emperor, the Empress, and Queen Hortense."

In the bath room is the dressing-table of the Empress. It is catalogued as "a very curious piece, made of yewtree-wood, mahogany and of hollywood, ornamented with steel." The most curious thing about it to us is a miniature of the Emperor, laid among toilet utensils of mother-of-pearl and silver gilt. Beneath the miniature, following the fantasy of



THE MUSIC ROOM IN THE CHATEAU MALMAISON

From a photograph

the time, are inscribed four lines, of which this is a free translation:

> He gave again to France
> Her altars, manners, laws,
> The universe knows his might,
> And his genius teaches kings.

Josephine had the picture before her while the *coiffeur* combed and curled and bound her hair, in the course of time carefully extracting white threads that stippled the black masses.

We were shown down-stairs the table on which the Articles of Separation were signed. It was brought here from the Tuileries. Even the egregious egoism and abnormal self-complacency of Madame Junot, that copious historian of Napoleon's domestic life, give place to something akin to simplicity of expression and real sympathy in the chapter descriptive of the interview with her afflicted friend, in which the direful theme was broached. The account is too long for insertion here. It be-

gins gravely and without sentimental preamble:

"I had an interview with the Empress at Malmaison. I went thither to breakfast, accompanied by my eldest daughter, Josephine, to whom she was much attached. I had sent her a plant from the Pyrenees, and she wished me to see it in the hothouse. But in vain she attempted to employ herself with those objects which usually pleased her most. Her eyes were frequently suffused with tears; she was pale and her manner marked indisposition.

"'It is very cold!' she said, drawing her shawl about her. . . . We were in the hothouse—the child running through its galleries, the Empress and I following slowly in silence. She suddenly stopped, and gathered some leaves from a shrub near her, and looking at me, said: . . ."

The preliminary queries had to do with the gathering of Madame Mère and her family in Paris—both women knew with what design and expectation.

"The Empress drew closer to me and, taking both my hands, said in a tone of grief, which is still present in my mind after an interval of twenty-four years:

"'Madame Junot! I entreat you to tell me all you have heard relating to me! I ask it as an especial favour. You know that they all desire to ruin me, my Hortense and my Eugène. Madame Junot! I again entreat as a favour that you will tell me all you know!'"

Upon being assured that her friend had "not heard the word 'divorce' uttered by Madame Mère or the princesses," the wife's forced composure gave way at hearing the word pronounced.

"She leaned upon my arm and wept bitterly.

"'Remember,' she said, 'what I say to you this day, in this place which is now a paradise, but which may soon become a desert to me. Remember that this separation will be my death and that it is *they* who will have killed me!'"

An exquisite touch of nature, because

unstudied, is the mention of the action of the little namesake of the weeping woman, who ran up to her with a handful of flowers and the pleading, "I do not like you to cry."

The Empress caught her in her arms, and the grief that had been eating out her heart for years broke forth in the lament over the cause of the Emperor's resolve to put her away:

"'I have felt as if a deadly poison were creeping through my veins when I have looked upon the fresh and rosy cheeks of a child—the joy of his mother, and, above all, the hope of his father. . . . And I am driven in disgrace from the side of him who has given me a crown! God is my witness that I love him more than my life, and much more than that throne and that crown which he has given me!'"

She bore herself like a queen in very deed before the Imperial Council of State on the fatal day. The family were present to a man and to a woman, and in full court costume.

She bade her late husband farewell in his chamber that night.

"At eleven, next morning, Josephine was to bid adieu to the Tuileries, never to enter the palace more. The whole household assembled on the stairs, in order to obtain a last look of a mistress whom they loved, and who carried into exile with her the hearts of all who had enjoyed the happiness of access to her presence.

"She was veiled from head to foot and, entering a close carriage with six horses, rapidly drove away without casting one look backward."

Few of her many biographers have laid the emphasis which it deserves upon the letter of congratulation she sent from her seclusion to the Emperor, when the news was brought to her that the woman who had supplanted her had given him the long-coveted son. The note was couched in such terms as one old friend might use in addressing another. In conclusion she said gently that she "had

hoped to receive the good news directly from himself, but begged him to believe in the sincerity of her sympathy in his great joy." His reply—well meant, no doubt—was elephantine in tact. He excused his remissness in not writing sooner upon the plea that he had "not been able to tear himself away from contemplation of his son."

This to the woman whose crown of sorrow was that *she* had not borne the heir to him! No one ever accused Napoleon of stupidity. That he was a monster of selfishness explains, without palliating, this breach of taste and lack of common humanity.

We repeat this with renewed stress to our indignant selves, while standing in the room in which she died. It is just as she left it. The chamber was rounded at the corners under her supervision. The red draperies, embroidered with gold thread, were her design.

"The bedstead is the one on which the Empress died, May 29, 1814. It is in

sculptured wood, and gilded, boat-shaped, and is marked with the letter 'J.' At the head, as ornaments, two swans in sculptured wood. At the foot, two horns of plenty."

Voluble Madame Junot was not too much absorbed in the vivisection of her own sensational agonies to overlook the scene attendant upon her flying visit to Malmaison, full to overflowing with the news of the approaching departure to Elba of the defeated Emperor. Josephine was in bed and suffering more in mind than in body, although seriously indisposed. Passing over the earlier portions of the conversation, we come to what has, strangely enough, been disputed by certain historians unfriendly to Josephine.

"'Madame Junot,' said the Empress, 'I have a great mind to write to Napoleon. Would you know the reason? I wish he would permit me to accompany him to the Isle of Elba, if Maria Louisa would keep away! Do you think she will follow him?"

"'Quite the contrary. She is incapable of doing so.'"

The confidante ventured to hint that the Emperor might not wish the attendance of his deposed wife.

"She seemed astonished.

"'Why should he refuse it?'

"'Because his sisters will assuredly go there, as well as Madame Mère. Let Your Majesty recollect all you suffered when seated on the throne of France, when strong in the title of the Emperor's consort. If, when you were sovereign, the Emperor's sisters could disturb your repose, what might they not do at the present day?'"

The argument was incontestable. It did not occur to either of the friends of the ruined man that none of his blood relatives would share his captivity.

Malmaison was once more full of titled guests for a few weeks succeeding Napoleon's departure. Two of the allied sovereigns called in person, and their action was the signal for an ovation.

Time-servers and trimmers vied with the open enemies of the fallen monarch in hurrying to pay court to the woman he had humbled before the world.

Her behaviour at this period of her life has excited much invidious comment. Certain critics boldly aver that she shared in the ungenerous triumph over the downfall of her former husband.

One declares that, in consenting to preside at the banquet given to the two emperors, the grand dukes, and the King of Prussia, and in opening the ball with the Emperor of Russia a day later, she was impelled by a romantic fancy that if she could win their regard she might make advantageous terms for the captive, perhaps avert banishment. It was a wild notion, but she had odd ideas as to politics, and diplomacy was not her forte except in social life.

She took her imperial partner during the evening into the gardens, which

were brilliantly illuminated, and they walked together in the fragrant alleys under the May heavens.

At the same ball she was notified that the new king (Louis XVIII.) would expect to receive her at his first drawing-room in the Tuileries.

Five days afterward, on May 29th, she lay dead in the bed under the gilded crown. A violent attack of what was then known as "inflammation of the throat" terminated her life with fearful suddenness.

"Napoleon! Elba!" were the last words she gasped. Was Napoleon right or wrong in believing, to the latest day of his life, that grief at his calamities and vain longings to join him in exile had shortened her days, if they did not actually kill her?

He believed it very much when he went straight to Malmaison on his return from Elba ten months after Josephine's death, and shut himself up in her room for some hours.

At the end of the fatal Hundred Days he was here again for nearly a week. While his stepdaughter Hortense was nominally his hostess, he was in reality a prisoner of war, and both of them knew it.

We see across the now ivy-mantled moat at the back of the house the alleys down which he strayed with Hortense the day after his arrival. Suspenseful days those were. Banishment to Elba had failed to bind the restive lion. Would it be deemed necessary to take his life?

Yet he could sentimentalise in true French fashion over departed joys:

"I shall never get reconciled to the idea of being here without my poor Josephine! I seem to see her come down the garden walk and pick the flowers she loved so well."

He was equipped for the journey to St. Helena, via England, when he paid a visit to the chamber in which his divorced wife had drawn her last painful breath

thirteen months ago, with his name upon her faded lips.

"He lingered there a long time." Thus runs the last sentence of the history of the Hundred Days.

VIII

AMY ROBSART, AT CUMNOR PLACE

VIII

AMY ROBSART, AT CUMNOR PLACE

WE rehearsed the story of the hapless Countess of Leicester last week in the very pleasance which Scott makes the scene of her stormy interview with Elizabeth.

The juniors of the party had gone to infinite pains to identify this same pleasance, tracing, step by step, the course of Leicester's promenade with his sovereign on that eventful day.

"'Flights of steps,'" quoted one from the book that had been the most important part of his luggage for two days—"'conducted them from terrace to terrace, and from parterre to parterre.' The Queen must have stood about *here*, when

she dismissed her Earl and turned into 'the grotto where Amy was concealed.'"

Not a vestige of grotto or fountain remains to justify the lad's topographical acumen. We were, nevertheless, so sure that this retired corner of the Kenilworth grounds was part of the famous pleasance, that we seated ourselves upon scattered blocks of fallen stones and, as is our wont, bent the powers of our united imaginations to the enchanting task of reproducing period and actors of that All-so-long-ago.

The day was faultless, even for an English midsummer. Fleecy clouds sailed languidly over the blue that had borrowed for the afternoon the depth and clarity of Southern Europe. Swallows were hiding and chirping in the crevices of the gray ruins of tower and wall. The bland air was the sweeter for the smell of mown grass in a neighbouring field. On a slope of turf that was the court-yard of the Castle in Leicester's and Amy's and Elizabeth's day—so remote from

AMY ROBSART

From the engraving by Marckl after the painting by Frounier

our nook and so completely hidden by intervening walls that the babble of voices was a confused murmur—a party of picnickers was making merry in true British bovine fashion.

"We will make believe that it is the murmur of the lords and ladies of the Court," the poet of the quintette decreed, drawing the well-thumbed volume from his pocket:—

"'The ladies in attendance," he read, with due emphasis, "'gifted with prudence, or endowed, perhaps, with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the Queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation between the Queen and the Earl.'

"And"—fluttering the pages—"we read that while the interview with Amy was going on, 'Leicester was the centre of a splendid group assembled together under an arcade or portico which closed

the alley.' That must have been over *there*"—nodding his head backward—"where 'Arriets and 'Arrys are disporting themselves at the present moment."

Then it was that our Historian-in-Chief shattered the crystal globe into which the dreamer was gazing.

"You know, of course,—I hate to say it as much as you hate to hear it!—but all the educated world knows now, what Scott could not have been ignorant of when he wrote *Kenilworth*,—that Amy Robsart had been in her grave under the pavement of St. Mary's Church, Oxford, for fifteen years when Elizabeth made the celebrated visit to Kenilworth."

"If she was indeed ever here at all!" retorted the reader, sarcastically.

"I believe that part of the story *is* history—not sheer romance," answered the mentor. "Don't be cross, old man! I 'd believe it all if I could. I found it hard to forgive the professor of English literature who told us the truth in my sophomore year. Even now, I am

tempted, particularly while we are at Kenilworth, to believe Walter Scott with all my might and let History go hang!"

As an honest chronicler, I own that one of our objects in driving the three-and-a-half miles separating classic Oxford from the village of Cumnor was to compare records of poor Amy's life and death with those of Leicester's Court career, and thus perchance to brace up our faith in *Kenilworth*. I make short work of the harrowing revelation that was like sharp arrows of the mighty to our Poet's soul. Amy Robsart died in 1560. Elizabeth visited Kenilworth in 1575.

Our disillusioned dreamer uttered but one moan in our hearing:

"And Sir Walter must have known it all the time!"

To do justice to his senior, I add that he evinced not a sign of ungenerous triumph.

"We'll be philosophical and regard the book as a romance, pure and simple,

eliminating the historical element. Now for looking up the facts *in re* Amy Robsart: She was a real personage; she married Robert Dudley; she lived at Cumnor Hall; she died—probably she was murdered—ten years after her marriage."

Cumnor is a typical English village, at the top of a gradual ascent from which one has a fine view of old Oxford. The principal of the three or four streets rambles leisurely past thatched cottages of grey stone, divided from the thoroughfare by narrow gardens ("front yards," as we would call them) filled with old-fashioned flowers. We drive straight to the church—led thither less by the interest we feel in what is still an admirably preserved building, after nearly five hundred years of hard usage, than because we have read that Cumnor Place was close by.

After traversing in fancy with Tressilian and Lambourne "the spacious orchard and neglected gardens, shutting out the

ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER

From an engraving in "Heroologia Anglica"

Hall from curious eyes," we should have been amazed at learning that the home of the neglected wife actually stood within the boundary wall of the church-yard, had we not, by tacit consent, ceased to refer to the novel for confirmation of fact or conjecture.

We were so fortunate as to secure in Oxford a copy of a sketch, bearing date of 1774, showing the Hall as it then appeared, and its proximity to the Church of St. Michael. We had been told that the Hall was pulled down a hundred years ago.

"The lame excuse put forward in defence of the act of vandalism was that, owing to the peculiar forms of the lease, whilst the Place stood, no timber on the estate could be cut down. Lead taken from the roof was sold and melted."

The rear wall of the church-yard was once a part of Cumnor Place. Within this, are irregular mounds of turf-grown earth, filling up the cellars and masking the foundations of the home to which

Robert Dudley, then in the prime of early manhood, brought his wife in 1559.

We are callous to shocks, by now, but a thrill of mild surprise ran through our veins upon reading the record of Amy Robsart's birth in 1531, and that of Robert Dudley in 1532. She was, then, in her twentieth year at the time of her marriage, and her bridegroom was a year younger.

"A mere boy!" murmurs the young reader, almost compassionately, and we do not dissent.

A little entry in the queer manuscript diary, kept by the pious and priggish son of Jane Seymour and Henry VIII, sets the date of the marriage as June fourth, 1550—in the golden heart of the summer-time.

I copy it literally:

"S. Robert dudeley, third sonne to th' erle of warwic, married S. John Robsarte's daughter, after whose marriage there were certain gentlemen that did strive who should take away a

gose's head which was hanged alive on two crose postes."

The diarist had not reached the age when the beauty of the bride took precedence in his fancy of the refined sport, confined in twentieth-century England to yokels who will never write "Esquire" after their names.

The Boy-King dubs Amy's father as "Sir." Contemporary law-papers—and himself, in writing his will—give him no higher title than "Esquire." The nuptials would not have found mention in the royal diary had not Robert Dudley been son of the Earl of Warwick. As Prince Arthur, Edward's uncle, was married to Katherine of Aragon at fifteen, and his father, Bluff King Hal, espoused his brother's widow at seventeen, the circumstance that the bridegroom in the present instance was a minor, was not commented upon. The youthful pair were married at Richmond, Surrey, in the sight of the King and his court.

They seem to have lived quietly for a few years in Berkshire, for we have no record connecting them with Cumnor until Cumnor Place was leased by Anthony Foster (or Forster) for their habitation. A guide-book informs us that it was "not a large house, but an ecclesiastical building of one storey, built around a quadrangle, measuring seventy-two feet by fifty-two. Constructed about the fourteenth century as a sanitarium for the monastery at Abingdon," it remained church property until bought by one William Owen, son of the eminent physician of that name.

Anthony was Robert Dudley's man of affairs. Authentic history bears out Scott's portraiture of him as the creature of a husband wearying of the woman who had been his faithful wife for eight years.

Scott threw the reins upon the neck of his imagination and plied whip and spur in depicting apartments to which the wife and her confidential attendant were

introduced by the man of affairs, when the mysterious workmen who came thither, and returned by night, had finished their task and departed for good.

"They had converted the apartments in that side of the building from the dilapidated appearance of a dissolved monastic house into the semblance of a royal palace."

A circumstantial description of the rooms which had been "fitted up with extraordinary splendour," occupies several closely printed pages.

Throughout the rest of the story the unfortunate lady is spoken of as "the Countess." Coming down to homely facts as developed by local records and other ancient chronicles, we sift out something that probably approximates the then status of the household.

The Dudleys were Forster's tenants in a dwelling which he (Forster) did not yet own. It was never a mansion, or anything better than a plain country house that had been a hospital. Robert Dud-

ley was not created Earl of Leicester until 1564, nor did he purchase Kenilworth—the record says dryly he "acquired" it—until 1563. In 1559–60, he was, therefore, the "third sonne" of the Earl of Warwick, with no known income beyond the portion of a younger scion of that noble house. Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558. It is possible, of course, that Leicester, whose vaulting ambition balked at nothing, may have already formed designs upon his monarch's affections which made it eminently convenient to hide his wife in the country remote from Court, and, in process of time, to get rid of her altogether. With these ends in view, it was hardly worth his while, nor did it accord with his means, to install her in "royal magnificence." The two fragments of letters bearing her signature betray her limited means prior to their removal to Cumnor. In 1556, two years after her father's death, she writes to her Norfolk steward, or her farmer,

instructing him as to the sale of sheep bred upon her land. She would have written earlier but for uneasiness of mind respecting her lord's unexplained absence.

"I not being alltogether in quyet for his soden departyng."

Her father's decease had not, apparently, enriched her to any extent, for she had taken upon herself domestic details with which ladies of quality were not wont to interest themselves. She is urgent that the sheep shall be sold to the best advantage, and, in a later epistle answers a dunning letter from her London tailor (man-milliner) by the plea of what we would term "hard times." In modern phrase, she is short of ready money.

The pressure of sordid cares, superadded to grief for her father's death, the loneliness of a strange abiding-place, and the growing frequency of her husband's "sudden departings" may well have wrought upon the "quyet" of the exile's spirit. One of the Berkshire annalists,

who has left an account of her taking-off, speaks of "the poor innocent lady as sad and heavy, as one who knew, by her present handling, that her death was not far off." That is, that Forster's brutal demeanour and speech and her lord's indifference engendered in her vague fears of the fate that might await one standing in the way of the ambition of the latter, whose henchman her nominal guardian was.

Another neighbourhood history copies part of a letter written to the absent Earl on the third day after Amy's death, by a cousin of Robert Dudley. Why he delayed reporting the circumstances of the disaster for so long is another of the mysteries that will ever hang over the tragedy of Cumnor Place.

After telling the bereaved spouse when and how Amy had died, the kinsman adds:

"She would not, that daie, suffer one of her owne sorte to tarrie at home, and was so earnest to have them gone to the

Fayre that with any of her owne sorte that mad reson of tarrying at home, she was verie angrie."

One of her own sort who persisted in remaining at Cumnor Place, when all of the household except the mistress went to Abingdon Fair, was Anthony Forster. Some narrators say this openly. Others hint it. Others, still, content themselves with saying that Forster was never able to explain where he was that day and evening.

For it was evening of the eighth of September, 1560, that the merrymakers, returning from the Fair, found Lady Dudley lying dead at the foot of the staircase, a "short, winding stone flight," and not the long, broad "set of stairs" we associate with a fatal fall. One plain-spoken chronicler asserts that "the luckless lady must have exercised some ingenuity if she broke her neck down this corkscrew mode of communication between two low floors."

A more ancient record goes further:

"Though it was vulgarly reported that she, by chance, fell down stairs—but still without hurting the hood that was upon her head!—yet the inhabitants will tell you that she was conveyed from her usual place where she lay, to another where the bed's head stood close to a privy postern door, where they in the night came and stifled her in her bed, and then flung her down-stairs, thereby believing the world would think it a mischance."

No post was sent off in mad haste for Lord Robert, who was at the Court and presumably on duty. We have seen that his kinsman took his time in transmitting the intelligence to London, or whereso-ever the Virgin Queen happened to be just then.

It is certain that Dudley neither came to the funeral—postponed though it was until he could give orders as to the coro-ner's inquest and the place of interment —nor, says the gossip of the time, did he ever visit Cumnor afterward. One de-

mure chronicle feigns to write seriously in averring that "the good Earl, to make plain to the world the great love he bare to her while she was alive, and what a grief the loss of so virtuous a lady was to his tender heart, caused her body to be re-buried in St. Mary's Church in Oxford with great pomp and ceremony."

Until this order came, the remains had lain in a temporary vault.

The funeral was a very imposing affair. The Mayor and Corporation of the city of Oxford, and heralds from the College of Arms, were present in funereal state, together with a large concourse of the friends and relatives of the deceased, her servants, and people from all the countryside, drawn by vulgar curiosity, or respect for the ill-used wife. However much accounts of the affair may differ in other particulars, they agree that she had the sympathy of all who heard of the deed, and the love of her attendants and humble neighbours. After the coroner and jury had handed in a verdict

of "accidental death," and the bereaved husband testified to the grief wrought in his "tender heart" by said accident, neither knight nor yeoman durst pipe a doubt. One compiler of county traditions and antiquities declares that the Earl's own chaplain, sent by the tender-hearted widower to preach the funeral sermon in St. Mary's—"tript once or twice in his speech, by recommending to their memories that virtuous lady 'so pitifully *murdered*' instead of saying "so pitifully slain.'"

In his preface to the Abbotsford Edition of *Kenilworth*, published in 1831, Sir Walter Scott quotes in full an elegy by William Julius Mickle, the Scotch poet (author of the ballad "There's nae luck aboot th' house"), which, Scott says, was the germ of his greatest romance.

This elegy bears the caption "Cumnor Hall," and voices the general belief that Amy was done to her death at the instigation of her "faithless husband."

Her residence in the "lonely pile" in the obscure village is thus deplored:

"Leicester!" she cried, "is this thy love
That thou so oft has sworn to me,
To leave me in this lonely grove,
Immured in shameful privity?"

Three of the best verses are familiar to all who have lent an attentive ear to the pitiful tragedy:

And ere the dawn of day appeared,
In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear,
Full many a piercing scream was heard,
And many a cry of mortal fear.

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An aerial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapped his wing
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

The mastiff howled at village door,
The oaks were shattered on the green;
Woe was the hour—for never more
That hapless Countess e'er was seen!

"The haunted towers" of Cumnor Place, which was never a "Hall," were

as much a figment of the poet's fancy as the "royal magnificence" of the hired house of a story-and-a-half was a chimera of the brain of the Wizard of the North.

He confessed laughingly that he had never seen Melrose "by the pale moonlight." We agree in the opinion that he had not visited Cumnor when he wrote *Kenilworth.*

The opening scene is laid in the taproom of the Black Bear, an ancient hostelry that was not pulled down until 1847. If it did not shelter Lambourne, Varney, and Tressilian, it had repute and antiquity that should have kept it intact until now. We see the site, just across the way from the shapeless mound which marks where the Place once stood.

We take grave faces and subdued spirits into the church, to be warmed into righteous wrath by the sight of a statue of Queen Elizabeth, homely and imperious, towering in the little nave into which we turn for a look at the famous "chained Bible" of immemorial age.

CUMNOR CHURCH AND PLACE

From Dr. Vyse's sketch, 1774

Our ruffled mood does not subside with the inspection of the "tomb, with two fine brasses, of Anthony Forster and his wife, above which is inscribed the oft-quoted epitaph in Latin, attributing to Amy Robsart's host virtues sufficient to have graced the memory of a mediæval saint."

Forster came mysteriously into possession of a large sum of money soon after Amy's death, and bought the property he had previously rented.

There is positive satisfaction, made piquant possibly, by a spice of malice, in reading from our neighbourhood chronicle, then and there, with the lying epitaph staring us in the face:

"Forster, after this fact" (that is, the "accidental death") "being a man formerly addicted to hospitality, company, mirth and music, was afterwards observed to forsake all this, and, with much melancholy and pensiveness (some say with madness), pined and drooped away."

A foot-note has told us that Cumnor Place was for many years reputed to be haunted by Amy's ghost. May there not have been gruesome significance in the henchman's bequest of the property to his noble patron? For so, we read, did his last will and testament ordain. Leicester, as we have said, never revisited the spot, but he graciously suffered Forster's widow to occupy the house during her lifetime.

And what of the subsequent career of the chief criminal?

We have seen his marble effigy in the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick, and read the epitaph as florid as the Latin lie above Forster's bones. Leicester's eulogy was dictated by his disconsolate relict, the Countess Lettice. She was his third wife, and widowed when he wedded her, as was her immmediate predecessor, Lady Sheffield. He married this last-named in 1573, and the Countess of Essex five years thereafter.

"He did not take unto himself a wife

for thirteen years after he murdered his first," comments an irreverent youngster. "I suppose he wasted all that time dancing attendance upon flirtatious Elizabeth!"

"Hardly wasted!" is the reply. "His share of the Court loaves and fishes was worth waiting for."

An exclamation from the third of the colloquists, who has been conning a bethumbed volume, awakes a startled echo in the church, empty of human occupants save for ourselves.

"Will you hear *this?* Ben Jonson—'rare Ben Jonson' you know—wrote to his crony, Drummond of Hawthornden:

"The Earl of Leicester gave a bottle of liquor to his lady"—the "relict" who got up the epitaph—"which he willed her to use in any faintness, which she, after his return from Court, not knowing it was poison, gave him and so he died."

He died September 4, 1588, "after his return from Court." Amy died on

the eighth day of that fatal month. His bow abode in strength for well-nigh a score of years after the Norfolk county girl was removed from his path. His errand at Court was to receive the richest honour his fond and fickle Queen had yet bestowed upon him. At that visit—the first after his "incompetency" in the conduct of the expedition in aid of the States-general against the Spaniards had lost the royal favour for a season—Elizabeth appointed him to the command of "all the Queen's armies and forces" assembling to resist the Spanish Armada.

He might well stand in need of a tonic in the reaction from the dizzying triumph. And it was a woman's hand—and that woman his wife—who held the poisoned cup to his lips! The cup that should have freed him from bondage as abhorrent as the tie that bound the lad of eighteen to Amy, daughter of John Robsart, Esquire, of Norfolk.

"The Mills of the Gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small."

IX

SALISBURY PLAIN AND STONE-HENGE

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SALISBURY PLAIN AND STONEHENGE

THE poseur is rarely honest even to himself. And your traveller, or tourist, or "tripper"—a bit of English slang we have picked up on this side—is usually more or less of a poseur.

With this in mind we entered into a solemn pact not to pose to one another, while walking with the Ghosts who make scene and town and homestead storied.

When, therefore, we found ourselves domiciled, for a week-end and two days over, in the White Hart, Salisbury, each made no secret of what had drawn him or her thither.

Two said boldly—"Stonehenge." One of the twain had a story of a traveller

of a date when tours were unheard-of luxuries, and the "tripper" was a thousand years in abeyance.

"A wander wit of Wiltshire, rambling to Rome, to gaze at antiquities, and there screwing himself into the company of antiquarians, they entreated him to illustrate unto them that famous monument in his country called 'Stonage.' His answer was that he had never seen it. Whereupon they kicked him out-of-doors, and bade him go home and see Stonage."

Our Cathedral-lover averred as bravely that the Cathedral—of which the foundation was laid in 1220, lifting the tallest spire and the most graceful in all England, against the sky—might justify a pilgrimage of twice three thousand miles.

A fourth had read of Old Sarum, the chief city of the kingdom before a Cathedral was built in the then stronghold of the Roman invaders. Alfred the Great had his court there in 878 A.D. and superintended the work upon the outer forti-

fications. Two hundred years later, the first Cathedral, of which St. Mary's is the immediate successor, was consecrated at Sarum. The ruins are still traceable on the road to Stonehenge.

Last of all, I made open confession, and with never a blush.

"Ever since I pored over *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* on Sunday afternoons, until I could have repeated whole pages without the book, I have longed to see the Plain for myself."

Before we slept it was arranged that, should the day be fine, we would drive, on the morrow, over the Plain, see the site of Sarum and visit Stonehenge, leaving the Cathedral for less propitious weather. By now, we had learned the wisdom of the proviso.

Southern France, nor Italy at her fairest, ever offered more benignant skies and softer airs than blessed our souls and senses as we took our way across the (to me) enchanted Plain.

Old Sarum was a definite disappoint-

ment to all except the archæologist. Guide-book in hand, he traced the city walls and identified the foundations of palace and Cathedral, where the rest saw shapeless and unmeaning mounds, overgrown by the marvellous turf that grows nowhere except in the British Isles. We had not heard before that the turf of Salisbury Plain has a world-wide reputation for depth, luxuriance, and elasticity, and felt, with delighted amazement, our feet sink into it as into a ten-ply velvet carpet, if such a thing were ever woven.

"Five generations are required to make a lawn," is an English proverb.

Five-and-twenty must have gone into the growth of the reaches of tenderest green rolling gently upward to the low hill crowned by Stonehenge. Just beyond Old Sarum, I put a question to our coachman:

"Have you ever heard of a little book called *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain?*"

His broad face was a-grin with pleasure.

"I'm thinkin' 't was the first book I

ever read, mem. I was born and had fifteen years of my life hereabouts"—a wave of his whip comprehending the vast, undulating horizon.

"And are there still shepherds here?"

"Wait a bit, mem, and you'll not have to ask that again!"

While he spoke there came into view beyond the rising ground, pouring slowly and steadily down the grassy slope, such a flock of sheep as we had never dreamed of seeing. To our startled eyes there were thousands. There must have been five or six hundred. The woolly tide narrowed, as by the action of machinery, in nearing an enclosure defined by a low fence, in which we now perceived an open gate. Without crowding or hustling, yet without slackening their pace, they streamed into the fold, and filled the farthest corners. It was like the manœuvring of a drilled army. We had stopped the carriage to watch them, and in our excitement had not seen three men and six dogs, the silent whippers-in

of the host. The men walked abreast behind the sheep, three dogs on each flank of the heaving mass. As it moved, there arose upon the air blended bleatings, like the far-off voice of many waters.

"But it is still early in the afternoon. Why are they folded so long before night?" we found breath to inquire.

We were told that it would take a long time to feed and water them, after which the shepherds, who lived perhaps a mile or so away, must go home to supper.

This was a shock! Then, shepherds no longer—

> "Watch their flocks by night,
> All seated on the ground?"

"Why should they?" was the answer when we put the query into secular prose. "The dogs sleep outside of the fence, and here is a hut near by for the watchman."

"Ye-e-s! Drive on now, if you please!"

In the long reverie that followed tem-

porary disillusion, I refused to give up the Shepherd of my childhood's Sunday afternoons. A few huts were scattered at long distances over the Plain. It may have been in one of these that the narrator sat down to the Sunday dinner with the family of the man with whom he had scraped acquaintance the day before. The Shepherd's reply to the strange gentleman's inquiry as to the probability of rain on the morrow is a household classic:

"It will be such weather as pleases me!"

To me the choicest gem in the pastoral is little Molly's complacent—

"How sorry we should be for *poor* people who have no salt to their potatoes! When, see, we have a whole dish full!"

As a tid-bit of optimistic content, it has no parallel in literature.

For me, the placid landscape was hallowed by the story which no young people read in our day. Yet Hannah More's biographers hint that the Shepherd was a real personage, whom she met

and talked with while she was a guest of the Bishop of Salisbury. I choose to believe it.

The vastness and sublimity of the hoary ruins of the Druidical temple are inconceivable by the imagination of one who has not seen Stonehenge. We found it as difficult to grasp the fact of its age—pretty well established by the latest excavations. As the stones gradually towered into view against the skyline, an awed voice read from an archæological report, recently published:

"It is judged from the implements or tools found, and from astronomical observations based on the fact that the avenue ("Via Sacra") to Stonehenge from the east of the ancients was in a line with the Altar Stone, so that the sun, rising on June twenty-first, and creeping over the horizon, shed his beams upon the Altar Stone, thus marking the solar half-year. The east of the ancients is not our east, but the difference between the position of the sun now and then,

to the avenue, gives, according to these calculations, a date of 3700 years old to Stonehenge."

Three thousand and seven hundred years! Inimitable Emory Ann, in Mrs. Whitney's *Sights and Insights*, says that in her foreign travels she "realised her Geography." At Stonehenge, if anywhere and ever, one realises one's chronology.

Antiquarians are agreed that a city surrounded the Temple in that inconceivable antiquity. The downs for miles around the ruins heave "in many a mouldering heap." They are "barrows" and "tumuli" in scientific nomenclature. In other words, a cemetery was crowned by the mighty edifice. The mounds that have been opened by the permission of Government prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt. In one section of the cemetery of which a titled antiquarian says—"I consider these tumuli were appropriated to the female tribes"—there were dug up "small cups, small lance heads, amber, jet and glass beads."

On this particular afternoon, we were not allowed to enjoy what a modern writer calls "the thrilling, awesome solitude of the place."

A slight fence of wire and sticks has been run around the central ruins, and a commonplace custodian, with a badge upon his cap, demanded sixpence as the price of admission. This should have been a partial guarantee of comparative seclusion. Whereas, the "place" was overrun by a party of the tribe known to us as "T. A."—*id est*, Travelling Americans. Definition,—those who come abroad because it is the thing to do as soon as one gets what the clan would style "the price." Under the care of a guide, a company of ten—six women and four men—were "doing" Stonehenge. Three of the men smoked while strolling, staring, and seeming to hearken to the droning cicerone. The women cackled, exclaimed, and patted the immense fallen stones with gloved hands. One cleared out with the point of her parasol the dust

THE TOWER OF CHARLES VIII.—CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE

From a photograph

that fills the "six small cavities made in the Slaughter Stone by blows from a flint tool."

While she scraped she declaimed shrilly against the "horrid old priests who killed human creatures upon that altar."

Another, older, graver, and quieter, followed me as I withdrew to a safe distance to look up at the group of standing and fallen obelisks. Her accent bespoke her a Southerner; her mien was decorous; her tone was reverent. She opened the dialogue without preamble:

"They may say all they like about Phœnicians and Druids and Romans. We have no machines now—and those old nations could n't have had any—that would hoist those big stones and lay them on the top of the others. *I* say it was the Hand of God that did it!"

She pronounced it "Gawd," and bore down hard upon the monosyllable.

She meant it so much that I did not smile until I told the story on the way

home. Reviewing the incident, it was a comfort to know that one being of human mould had solved to her satisfaction the Mighty prehistoric Mystery.

Sir Philip Sidney was content to leave the wonder unexplained:

Near Wilton sweet, huge heaps of stones are found,
But so confused that neither any eye
Can count them first, nor reason try
What force them brought to so unlikely ground.

In the parlor of The White Hart that evening, I was accosted by an Englishman in clerical attire.

"I beg pardon, but I observed you at Stonehenge this afternoon, and I am curious to know what impression it made upon you."

For answer, I pointed to a sentence in a guide-book I had taken from the table:

"The immortal Pepys says the stones are 'as prodigious as any tales I ever heard of them, and worth going any journey to see.' What Pepys says, I endorse

heartily. I would make it stronger if I had the right words."

His puzzled air betokened ignorant contempt of Pepys, of whom he now heard for the first time, and intelligent contempt for me.

"I disagree with you, and with the other person. I have lived in the South of England forty years and I have never seen Stonehenge until to-day. I must say that I am disappointed in it. Disappointed—and wofully! I shall never trouble myself to go again!"

He walked away, shaking his head above his straight collar in official disapproval of Stonehenge and all its obelisks.

"How old is The White Hart?" queried I of mine host one morning, in passing down the hall, and noting the unevenness of the stone floor.

He was a genial Boniface, and our appreciation of the comfort to be had in a genuine old English hostelry had won his regard.

"We have no exact date on that point," he answered. "But there is an entry in the town records of a fine paid by a proprietor in 1550 for keeping the tap-room open on Sunday."

He followed us to the door. There were but two of us to-day who were bound for the Cathedral. The boys had an expedition of their own.

In a few words the landlord told that the tablet built into the Cathedral wall, as a memorial to the Americans who were killed in a railway accident at Salisbury the year before, was to be unveiled that afternoon. The United States ambassador was the orator chosen for the occasion. To avoid the crowd of sight-seers who might be drawn thither by idle curiosity, admission was to be had by ticket. He had several of these. Would we would accept a couple with his compliments?

We had them in our pockets when we entered the Cathedral. We had attended Divine service here on Sunday,

and this was not our second or third visit. There was less temptation than usual to linger in the solemn precincts to-day, for workmen were busy with preparations for the ceremonial of the afternoon. The tablet had been set in the wall, but was closely curtained.

"The gift to the Cathedral of several Americans," said a verger. And, dropping his voice to a confidential key—"We had hoped it would take the form of a window. But it was not to be!"

At that precise moment, in turning my head to hide the uncontrollable flicker of amusement at his sigh of resignation to the inevitable, my eye fell upon a box fastened to a central pillar. A legible inscription informed visitors that contributions would be thankfully received in behalf of a fund for erecting a memorial window to "THE REVEREND GEORGE HERBERT, former incumbent of the Parish of Bemerton."

I wheeled upon the verger with abrupt-

ness he must have set down as "very, very American—don't you know?"

"Is *Bemerton* near Salisbury?"

As I had opened my purse with one obvious purpose, he condoned the national brusqueness.

"About two-and-a-half miles away. Thank you!" in response to the rattle of coins within the box.

My companion and I exchanged eloquent glances. Speech was unnecessary. A carriage stood, vacant and inviting, at the gate. We got in, almost in silence, drove to The White Hart, and returned the complimentary tickets to the landlord with regrets that we could not use them. What were unveiled memorial tablets and United States Ministers to two women who had known and loved and reverenced Gentle George Herbert from their infancy up?

X

GENTLE GEORGE HERBERT AT BEMERTON

X

GENTLE GEORGE HERBERT AT BEMERTON

"THE Church, as by law established, is unable to reach the poor sinner. Forms and ceremonies are in vain. The impotent clergy neglect the flock. See the three parishes of Quidhampton, Fugglestone, and Bemerton, and say what care the learnèd man who lives sixteen miles away exercises over the souls of these parishes. See how uneducated and low-born deacons, slovenly in their ways, gabble the prayers!"

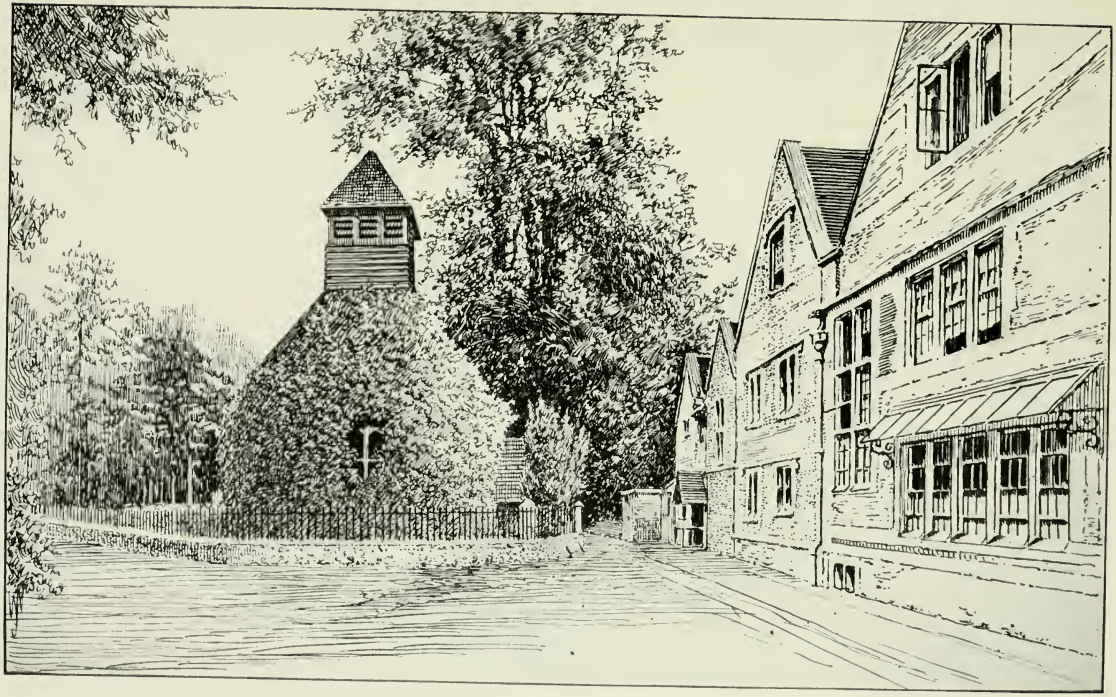
Thus wrote one who had made the English Church of the latter part of the reign of Charles First a careful study.[1]

[1] *Under Salisbury Spire.* By Emma Marshall.

Yet this was the age that produced George Herbert. And James First was the royal patron who pronounced the student, then a mere lad, "the jewel of his University."

"He had speedily made a name for himself at the University," says an erudite biographer. "Besides the usual Latin and Greek, he read French, Italian, and Spanish as well as Hebrew." His poetical gifts were acknowledged by his preceptors when he was a twelve-year-old school-boy. In 1612, two Latin poems in commemoration of the death of the lamented Prince Henry ("Henrici, Illustrissimi Principia Walliæ") were included in the Cambridge *Royal Collection of Elegies* written by the finest scholars in England. George Herbert was then in his nineteenth year. He was twenty-five when he received the appointment to the office of Public Orator.

The duties of the Orator were defined by himself in a home-letter while another man held it:



BEMERTON CHURCH AND RECTORY

Drawn by Wm. J. Wilson

"It is the finest place in the University, though not the gainfullest, yet it will be about thirty pounds per annum. The commodiousness is beyond the revenue, for the Orator writes all the University letters, be it to the King, Prince, or whoever comes to the University. To requite these pains, he takes place next to the Doctors, is at all their assemblies and meetings, and sits above the Proctors. These and other things are gaynesses which would please a young man."

His most loving and conscientious biographer, the famous Izaak Walton, records that "he continued in this place eight years, and managed it with as becoming and grave a gayety as any had ever before, or since that time. For he had acquired great learning, and was blest with a high fancy, a civil and sharp wit, and a natural elegance, both in his behaviour, his tongue, and his pen."

From another loving admirer we have a portrait of the court favourite:

"A tall, slender figure, clad in rich black velvet, with costly lace ruffles and collar, and the sword-hilt worn at his belt sparkling with diamonds.

"His eyes were especially lucid, but soft in their expression, and the length and sharpness of his face—perhaps a little too long in youth for beauty—was softened by the rich curls which fell on either side of it. On his lips was the law of kindness, and when they parted in a smile, his whole face was illuminated."

Yet the Church and the world know him as the gentle poet whose genius was consecrated to the cause of Him Whom he fondly and reverently named "the Master," before he took orders in the Church. What wrought the miracle? Walton is again our resort. I cannot find it in my heart to modernise his narrative, or to clothe the facts he presents in my own language:

"In this time of Mr. Herbert's attendance and expectation of some good occasion to remove from Cambridge to Court,

God, in Whom there is an unseen chain of causes, did in a short time put an end to the lives of two of his most obliging and powerful friends, and not long after them, King James died also, and with him all Mr. Herbert's hopes. So he presently betook himself to a retreat from London, to a friend in Kent, where he lived very privately, and was such a lover of solitariness as was judged to impair his health more than his study had done. In this time of retirement he had many conflicts with himself, whether he should return to the painted pleasures of the Court life, or betake himself to a study of divinity and enter into sacred orders, to which the dear mother had often persuaded him."

George Herbert's biography would be incomplete, and this humble tribute to a great and good man lacking in one essential feature, were the "dear mother" passed over with this casual reference to her influence upon the son who was educated at home under her eye up to

his thirteenth year. Dr. John Donne, the eccentric Dean of St. Paul's and an ancestor of William Cowper, praised Mrs. Herbert in her youth, and again in the maturity of her noble life, in verses entitled "Autumnal Beauty."

Two lines of the poem have been made familiar by frequent quotation:

> No spring, nor summer beauty has such grace
> As I have seen in an autumnal face.

He solicited the honour of preaching the funeral sermon of "the Elect Lady," —one of the most eloquent discourses he ever delivered, and he was the greatest preacher of his generation. In her poet-son's Latin ode, "Parentalia," he "never wearies in uttering his love, veneration, and gratitude." No translation does justice to the exquisite outflow of filial devotion.

"My mother," he wrote elsewhere, "was such an one as God designed mothers to be. She never wearied of exertion for our good, and looked upon the duties of a

mother as sacred." In close connection with the mention of her fervent desire that George—her fifth son and the one who in intellect and spiritual gifts most resembled the mother—should take orders, Walton adds:

"Those were such conflicts as they only can know that have endured them. For ambitious desires and the outward glory of the world are not easily laid aside, but at last God inclined him to put on a resolution to serve at His altar."

A tame and stilted announcement of renunciation that was whole-souled to sublimity, and a consecration so entire that the gay and the religious world marvelled together. If Sir Philip Sidney—whose castle of Penshurst was nigh unto the obscure parish of the transformed courtier—were a Bayard in courage and a Galahad in purity, George Herbert united the gentleness and piety of St. John with the stalwart charity of St. Christopher. One incident, connected

with the earlier months of his incumbency of the hitherto neglected parish of Bemerton, deserves to be as well-known as the story of Sir Philip Sidney's dying gift to the wounded soldier. It was his habit to walk twice a week from Bemerton to Salisbury, where he instructed a class of men in church music. One afternoon he overtook a poor carrier whose horse had fallen down in the miry road.

"Whereupon, Master Herbert, giving the boy, who was his companion, his canonical coat to hold, with a wondrous will set himself to unload the pack saddle, and then helped the man to set the horse on his legs and replace the load. . . .

"As they got near Salisbury, Master Herbert laughed at the rent in his cassock and the crumpled state of his collar, and the marks of dirt on his hands. When they arrived a gentleman exclaimed:

"'It was beneath a gentleman of your

rank, sir, to stoop to such mean, dirty work. Some labourers should have been called.'

"Thereupon, Master Herbert smiled and said some words to the effect that he wished he might have such a chance of helping a poor wayfarer every day. And he added that the memory of that poor man's blessing would make music for him until midnight."

In our drive over the now smooth road, winding leisurely through the lovely English plain, bounded on both sides by flowering hedges one sees nowhere but in the tight little island, we had settled to our satisfaction upon the precise turn of the highway at which the clergyman and boy came in sight of the hapless carrier and his prostrate beast. We were in the hamlet of Bemerton (it is hardly a village) before we ceased talking of the historic anecdote. It was a sleepy hamlet in the reign of King Charles. It was drowsing peacefully when we drove by the shortest route to the church.

The roll of the wheels and the click of the horses' hoofs echoed as sharply as if midnight had brooded over the place instead of high noon.

We had seen no smaller church in His Majesty's dominions than the stone building before which our coachman drew rein. The gables, and all of the side walls except where they are broken by the arched windows, are literally swathed in ivy. We alighted in silence. Not a living human creature save our three selves was visible up and down the street. The quiet was eerie. The door was ajar, and yielded noiselessly as we pushed it further open.

The modest historical romance, *Under Salisbury Spire*, portrays so graphically the scene that recurred to our minds with the opening of that door, that I crave leave to substitute it for the official report of the Ordination:

"The churchwarden entered the church and, shutting the door, Master Herbert advanced and knocked thrice. Then,

the voice from within asked, 'Who comes hither?'

"Master Herbert answered in clear musical tones—'I, George Herbert, called of God to minister in this, His temple, and authorised thereto by his lordship, Dr. Davenant, Bishop of Salisbury.'

"Then the door opened, and that tall figure, clothed in his clerical habit, passed out of sight. Presently, the tolling of the bell was heard, according to usage, and he was left alone in the church."

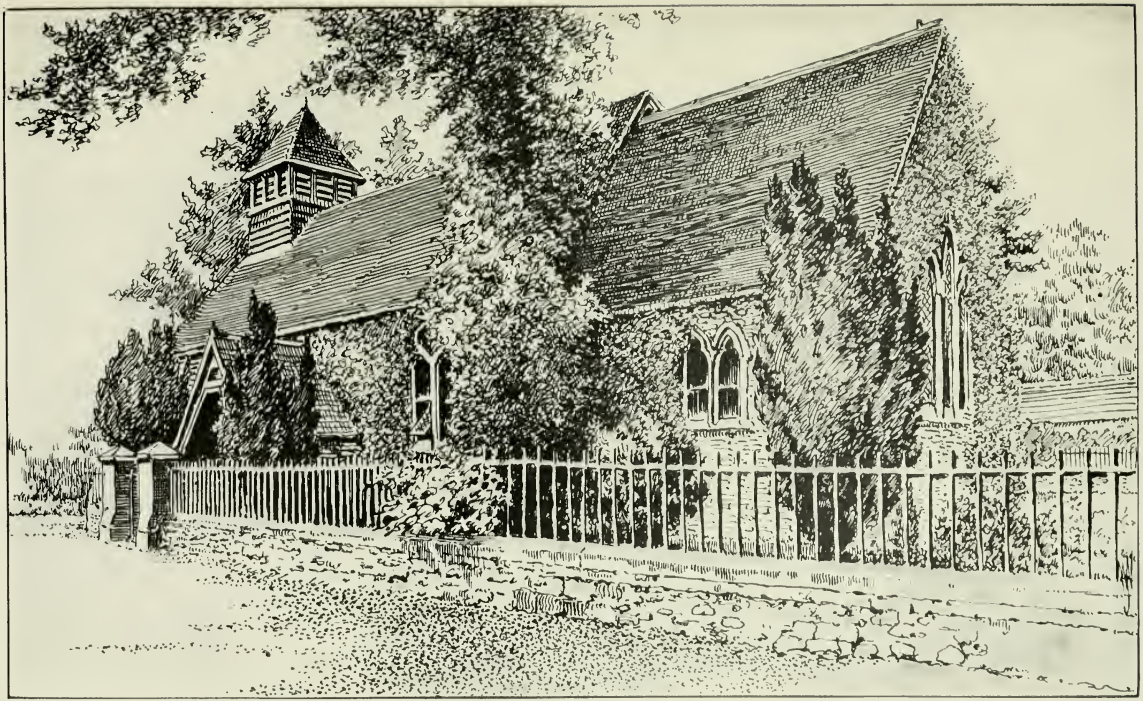
We know what followed as well as if an eyewitness had told us of it—how the little crowd waited without that closed door until the long silence within awakened alarm. It was the custom for the candidate for ordination to offer a brief prayer prescribed by the Church, as he knelt at the altar, and then to admit those to whom he was to read the service. The sexton at length ventured to unclose the door and look in. Again, the author of the "history" shall speak:

"There, in the little church, which is so small that it is easy to take in the length and height and breadth at one glance, I saw Master Herbert lying prostrate before the altar, just below the place where, through the open window, came a ray of light. . . .

"At last he rose, and his face as he came out, and with hands uplifted blessed the little group who anxiously expected him, was as the face of an angel."

Through the same open window a ray of sunlight, made tremulous by the ivy-curtain stirring in the breeze, fell now upon the place where he had lain that day, rapt in holy ecstasy. We sat down in the nearest pew, and for a long time nothing was heard but the subdued chirping of a bird that had made her nest in the ivy. "G. H." is carved in the stone marking his grave beneath the chancel.

Such a wee sanctuary as it is! And the fame of him who asked no more



BEMERTON CHURCH

Drawn by Wm. J. Wilson

honourable preferment than this humble cure of souls, has gone abroad through all the earth!

I cannot recollect when his poems were not known and belovèd in my home. His sacred lyrics have been for long, long years songs in the house of my pilgrimage, coming readily to my lips in moments of sudden joy or sorrow, staying my soul under the stress of homely toils and carking, belittling cares such as are known, in all their meanness and weariness, to women only. For the hours of loftier devotion, "The Church Porch" had led me into "The Temple," to behold there the foreshadowing of the heaven in the light of which the inspired singer walked for the rest of his days on earth. Yet, as I sat by his tomb, and within walls that had echoed back the ringing "silver voice," alike sweet in speech and in song, the simplest of his hymns I learned at my mother's knee was in my ears, and would admit none other:

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee.

It was the key-note of the life he lived after he turned his back upon the "painted pleasures of the Court." Taking for his motto, "What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common," he made himself one with the lowliest of his flock.

Walton's summary of Herbert's ministry at Bemerton reads like—"Put off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground":

"I have now brought him to the Parsonage of Bemerton and to the thirty-sixth year of his age, and must stop here and bespeak the reader to prepare for an almost incredible story of the great sanctity of the short remainder of his holy life: a life so full of charity, humility, and all Christian virtues that it deserves the eloquence of St. Chrysostom to commend and declare it."

We had not thought of visiting the Parsonage, separated from the church by the width of the narrow street, albeit we had read the pretty romance of Mistress Jane Danvers's love for Master George Herbert, engendered by what she had heard of his many graces of person and mind, and his singular devotion to his holy calling, before she had so much as seen him, and how her affection was reciprocated right speedily and this at their first meeting.

"At which time a mutual affection entered into both their hearts as a conqueror enters into a surprised city; and love having got such possession, governed and made there such laws as neither party was able to resist, insomuch that she chang'd her name into 'Herbert' the third day after this first interview."

Our chronicler proceeds to justify this haste by representing that the pair had been made thoroughly acquainted before this interview "by such as understood Mr. Herbert's and her temper of mind

and also their estates so well that the suddenness was justifiable by the strictest rules of prudence. And the more because it proved so happy for both parties. Indeed so happy that there was never any opposition between them unless it were a contest which should most incline to a complyance with the other's desires."

A singular incident changed the current of our thoughts and altered our plans suddenly. Nearly opposite the door by which we were about to leave the tiny church, a tablet in the wall caught my eye. It was set there in memory of a clergyman who had served the parish of Bemerton for a long term of years (forty, if my memory is faithful) and died in 1837. His Christian name was "Herbert," as was natural enough. This, and his surname and the appended "D.D.," were the same as those of a dear brother of my own who had passed into eternal rest a year before.

The familiar inscription smote me

dumb. I read it over and over, dazed and incredulous, as in a mental paralysis:

"The Reverend Herbert H—, D.D."

Ours is an English family. This I knew, and had traced it to the parent stock in other parts of the kingdom. I must know if there were a branch of it in, or near Salisbury. The present Rector would be able to tell me if this man, whose name, profession, and degree were identical with those of my brother, had left descendants hereabouts.

In reviewing the action, it seems abrupt and intrusive. The conviction had not dawned upon me when we stood in the hall of the Rectory and asked if we might speak with the Rector. We did not even know his name, but we sent up a respectful message that two Americans craved a brief interview. He answered the summons on the instant, running down stairs with a lighter step than one might expect from a man sixty or thereabouts, and greeting us with the ready courtesy of a thoroughbred.

"My wife will be happy to give you information on the subject," he said when our errand was told. "I am on the point of setting out for London for a fortnight's vacation, and must beg you to excuse me. But you will step into the drawing-room and talk with her?"

In speaking, he moved toward the door of the drawing-room, and, before we could remonstrate, ushered us into the presence of a gentlewoman who might have stepped—grey silk gown, lace cap, and silver-grey hair—out of one of Charlotte M. Yonge's novels. To complete the resemblance, she sat at a table, writing letters, or casting up household accounts.

Truly a gracious, comely presence we would have come far to see! Declining her invitation to be seated, we made our story short, sandwiching it between excuses for the intrusion.

"It is no intrusion"—we were assured, and when we had learned that the former incumbent of the Bemerton

Church had left no descendants in the vicinity, also that "H———" was not a Salisbury name, she interrupted our apologetic adieux to say:

"Perhaps you would like to walk in George Herbert's garden and to see the summer-house he is said to have built? You will excuse me for not accompanying you, as I am suffering from rheumatism, and the turf is damp. But follow the windings of the river to the right, and you will see the summer-house. Also, George Herbert's medlar-tree. It is on the right as you go up the bank. It is very old, now, and nearly dead. We have done our best to save it by binding the trunk with zinc."

The door to which she directed us opened upon the lawn bespangled with dew-drops where the shade of a mighty fir-tree lay darkly across the sward. Crossing this, we were upon the brink of the river.

George Herbert's own "swift-flowing Nadder," and running through the garden

that was a "very Paradise of delight to him."

"He would say it was his Garden of Eden; and he planted fruit-trees there, as well as flowers and shrubs, and he made to grow there many healing and medicinal herbs, which he dispensed to the poor."

We recognised the aged medlar by the cinctures of zinc skilfully bound about the crooked trunk. A few green leaves had put out from the outer branches and we espied, with a smile that was pitying and tender, a cluster of unripe fruit, nestled forlornly in a bunch of foliage. As soon as the mistress of the manse spoke of the medlar, we recollected that it had a story of its own.

George Herbert's predisposition to consumption was developed—as we now believe—by the low-lying meadows bordering the beautiful river. He was far from well when his wife found him digging a hole in which to set a little medlar-tree. Exclaiming that he was not strong

enough for the task, Jane took the spade from his hand and tried to dig, her foot on one side of the implement, "bidding Master Herbert put his on t' other, and then one slipped off, and then another, Master Herbert calling her 'a pretty meddler,' and promising that when the tree bore fruit she should have the first.

"When the little tree put forth its leaves in the spring, he lay a-dying in the chamber which overlooks the garden where it flourished."

We looked up at the windows of the sacred chamber. He grew too feeble to take his walk twice a week to Salisbury, but he made no moan. Bringing his lute out into the garden on mild days, he sang the hymns forever associated with his blessèd memory, accompanying himself, and sustaining with the instrument the voice that was losing strength, but not sweetness.

One biographer remarks of those last days:

"He not merely walked down the valley

of the shadow of death—knowing no fear, and so making no haste—but he *sang!*"

One last excerpt from Izaak Walton's loving tribute to the subject of his memoir gives the particulars of the final stage of the triumphal progress:

"The Sunday before his death, he arose suddenly from his couch, called for one of his instruments, took it into his hand, and said—'My God! my God!—

> 'My music shall find Thee,
> And every string
> Shall have His attribute to sing.'

And having tuned it, he played and sang:

> 'The Sundaies of man's life,
> Thredded together on Time's string,
> Make bracelets to adorn the wife
> Of th' eternal, glorious King.
> On Sunday, Heaven's dore stands ope;
> Blessings are plentifull and rife,
> More plentifull, then, Hope.'

"Thus he sang on earth such hymns

and anthems as the angels and he now sing in Heaven."

And the author of *Under Salisbury Spire:*

"He had finished his course; he had kept the faith, and he rests in perfect bliss in the presence of Him of Whom he never spoke but in low, reverent tones, as 'Jesus, my Master.'"

It was a never-to-be-forgotten privilege to stand by the bright little river and say over all this to our reverent souls.

Our typical Lady of the Rectory had yet another treat in store when we thanked her for the stroll along the Nadder.

"I am sure you would like to see George Herbert's study?"

She led the way across the hall to the hallowed precincts.

The study is larger now than when Master Herbert thought out his sermons and wrote there verses, the rhythm of which he tested by setting them to music and singing them to the accompaniment

of the lute. The windows look directly upon the church.

His desk stood where, by raising his head, he could see Porch and Temple when he wrote:

When once thy foot enters the Church, be bare[1];
God is more there than thou, for thou art there
Only by His permission; then beware,
And make thyself all reverence and fear.
Kneeling ne'er spoiled silk stockings; quit thy state.
All equal are within the Churche's gate.

[1] "Bare"—uncovered, or bare-headed.

XI

MARIE STUART AT AMBOISE

XI

MARIE STUART AT AMBOISE

MARY Queen of the Scots—but so long a resident in France that she was a Frenchwoman in all save the name—was married at sixteen to the fifteen-year-old Dauphin, Francis, on April 24, 1558.

He was King Francis II. when the youthful pair made a royal progress of the historic chateaux of Touraine, tarrying longest at magnificent Blois, the perfected flower of the architectural taste of three of the greatest monarchs of their age.

We saw their apartments yesterday. They were directly above those of Francis's mother, Catherine de' Medici.

The gayest of European Courts was a fit setting for the fair pearl of princesses. Life was passing bright to her that year, in spite of the domination, which was always tyranny, of her relative-in-law. Mary had not yet angered the haughty Florentine by speaking of her as the "daughter of a tradesman," but there was no love lost between them. A sentence from fascinating *Old Touraine*, which has been our guide-book through this enchanted region, throws a flash-light upon the two as they were during that festal week:

"The face of Catherine, grave and sombre, almost livid in the daytime, though the ivory skin lit up well at night, threw into lively contrast the fresh pink and white of the youthful and piquante Marie Stuart, whose careless gaiety had completely captivated the fragile little King, almost crushed by the severity of his mother."

A French chronicler gives us an unflattering portrait of the virtual ruler

FRANCIS II. OF FRANCE

From an engraving by J. Chapman

of France that enhances the contrast with her beautiful rival in her son's affections:

"Her habits are irregular and she eats much, but afterwards seeks remedy in strong exercise. In spite of all this, her face is always pale and almost of a greenish tinge, and *she is very fat.*"

The fragile young King was amiable of disposition and unfeignedly in love with the beautiful woman who, in turn, gave him the womanly cares and petting he had never known from his stern parent. He worshipped her madly, and basked in her presence as a plant dwarfed by a frosty spring expands in the sunshine.

The Blois gaieties were in full swing when the Court was removed, with brief notice, to Amboise.

We read why, balancing the several books that tell the gruesome tale upon the rail of the balcony overlooking the glorious panorama of the valley of the Loire.

This was not Marie Stuart's first visit

to Amboise. The royal progress of which I have spoken included a triumphal entrance into the town—now dwindled down to a mere village of white houses, aptly likened by Henry James to "crumbs that have fallen from a well-laden table." There was a fortress upon this rocky height in the days of the Roman invasion. Our guide has told us of a funny little passport, said to have been issued by a then governor of Amboise to a "person named Cæsar." The castle, the work of successive dynasties, had been the most formidable in southern France for centuries. Besides being better defended than magnificent Blois, it had the advantage of proximity to the danger that, according to Catherine's spies, threatened the integrity of the kingdom and the life of the King. The enemy could be grappled with at short range.

Touraine swarmed with Huguenots. The queer caves in rocks, honeycombed by ancient excavations, we have wondered over in our tour, were the refuges of hunted

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

From a contemporary drawing by A. Riffaut

seceders from the established Church, and the abhorrent doctrines of Calvin had converts in high places. So numerous were the nobles and gentry who resented the persecutions of their compatriots for conscience' sake, that an organised movement was on foot to protest formally to the new king against abuses no longer to be endured. What was characterised as "the iniquitous trial" of a Huguenot leader and his death at the stake brought matters to a head.

Of the make-up of the rebellious faction we learn from *Old Touraine:*

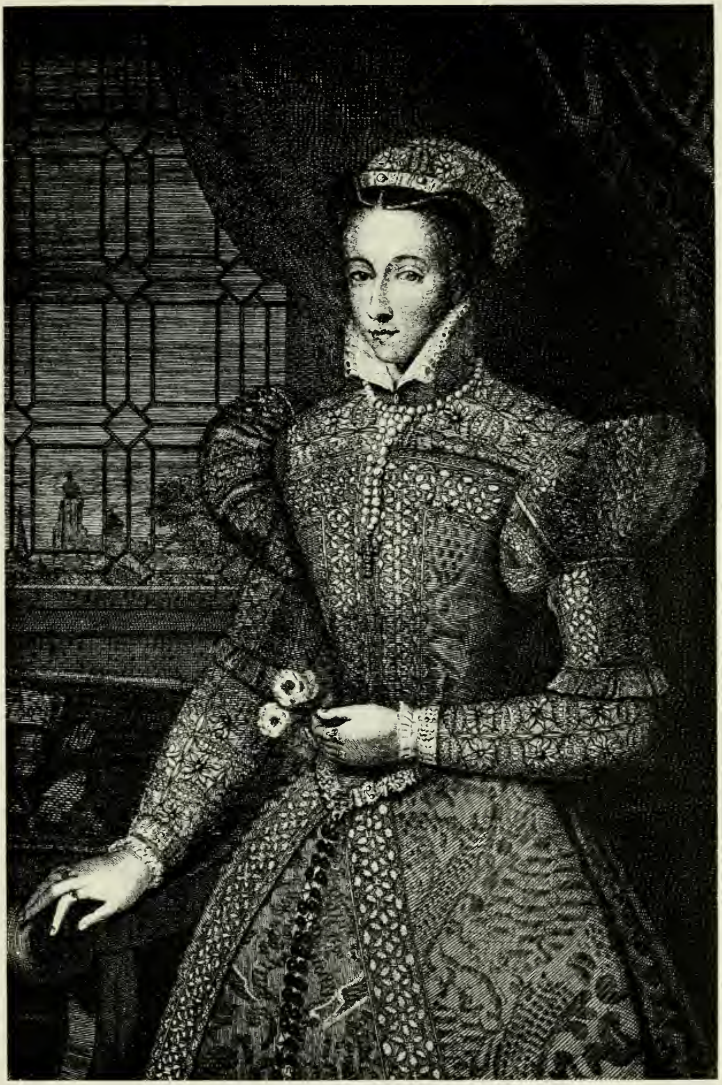
"The Huguenots could wait no longer, and they found themselves irreparably joined to the great party of 'The Discontented,' which contained three main elements—the first imbued with honest zeal for their religion, and with a thoroughly sincere devotion to their country and their King; the second, mainly composed of the more ambitious spirits eager for some change from the present miserable state of affairs; the third, eager

for vengeance on the Guises both for public and private reasons."

At the head of the first-named party to the uprising was a prominent Huguenot nobleman, Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé. "The dumb Chief," he was called, a name that meant much to his party. He was one of the Court, yet had not raised his voice against prevailing abuses, biding the time when the combination of which he was the acknowledged chief should bid him speak. In the arrangements for the projected rising and protest, he made one strenuous stipulation:

"Nothing is to be done against His Majesty, the King, the princes of the blood, or the legitimate estates of the realm."

So sure was he that pacific counsels would prevail if the "Discontents" could obtain a candid hearing from the King and Council, that he repaired in person to Amboise at news of the removal of the Court, intent upon using his influence in behalf of his party.



MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

From the painting by Federico Zucchero

A terrible surprise awaited Catherine and her coadjutors upon their arrival. The fortress was impregnable in position and strength, but so insufficiently supplied as to garrison and food, that it could not withstand a siege. The town was strongly Protestant and the neighbourhood hostile or indifferent. These were the excuses given by later historians of the contrary faith for the desperate measures resolved upon as soon as the facts in the case were made known.

Condé was in the castle, and had showed his hand in conference with the Guises with Catherine at their head. As soon as the deputies appointed to wait upon the King had been received and answered, he would call an assembly of the States-General, and see if justice could not be done to those he represented. From that moment, although he might not have been aware of it, he was, virtually, a prisoner.

The roads and woods were reported to be swarming with malcontents, all moving

toward the castle. A company of five hundred men-at-arms appeared before the gates, asking for a pass to the presence of the King, and avowing their peaceable intention. They were delegates, not assailants, and were ready to give hostages for their good faith. The Duc de Nemours, "a prince of the blood," signed his name to a sworn promise of safe conduct, "on the faith of a Prince, and on the damnation of his soul," that the envoys should not be harmed, and the gates were opened to them:

"All considering it a great honour and advantage to have thus free access to the King."

They were at once thrown into the dungeons we saw down there half an hour ago, and put to the torture.

Those who outlived the hellish tortures were to be executed.

Other bodies of the Discontents, ignorant of what had happened, continued to arrive.

This brings us to the Great Day of the Carnival of Blood.

Upon the balcony where we now stand, was collected the Court that had held high revel last week at Blois. The court-yard below was lined to the top of the wall with benches erected as for public games. "All the scoundrels of the neighbourhood rallied to the powerful Guises." From byways and hedges of the country, and the slums of towns within a radius of twenty miles, the scum of humanity had gathered like vultures lured by the scent of carrion. The Guise cavalry had scoured the woods and roads for material for the *festa*. In bands of ten and twenty, the unarmed deputies were dragged inside the castle-gates, and bound hand and foot to await their fate. There was not standing-room for another in the great court-yard behind the castle and in that upon which we are now looking.

The Court, including the Queen Mother and her children and daughter-in-law, had attended early mass in the Castle chapel, and occupied the front places in the long iron balcony. In a conspicuous position stood Condé, now con-

scious of his true situation, and absolutely powerless to avert the impending catastrophe.

The Scottish Guards, who had been on duty since dawn, parted their ranks and there walked forth from dungeon and court-yards, into the open space around a rude scaffold covered with black, hundreds of Huguenot nobles. The common herd were massacred at the back of the castle. The men of gentle blood and breeding were to have the honour of dying in the presence of their King and his bonnie bride. The doomed trod steadily forward, falling, as by the force of habit, into military rank and file, until all were marshalled in a solid body. Perhaps a whispered word went from line to line, and from man to man. Certain it is that every head was raised, as by a common impulse, and from every throat arose the, to the Huguenots, familiar air of the 67th Psalm:

"God be merciful unto us and bless us,
And show us the light of His countenance."

The best French scholar in our little party reads it aloud in the language in which it was chanted by those hundreds of strong men, that brilliant day in early spring. It brought us nearer to them to hear the very words they sang:

"Dieu nous soit doux et favourable;
Nous benissant par sa bonté;
Et de son visage adorable
Nous fasse luire de sa clarté."

Clément Marot translated the Psalm into French, along with fifty others. We recall, in reading his name here, that he was the poet laureate of Francis I., father of the boy who sat in this very balcony beside his beautiful Queen.

Another simultaneous movement ran through the compact body of singers as the last words of the first stanza were sung, and every eye was turned upon their "dumb Chief," standing next the Queen, and surrounded by the gentlemen of the Court. With military precision his followers, as one man, bowed in a silent salute, and he returned it as silently.

"By George!" breaks in the Irrepressible with an odd break in his voice—"there is nothing finer than that in all history! '*Cæsar—morituri te salutamus!*' was commonplace by comparison!"

Nothing more is said for a long minute. I know that all imaginations are busy with visions of the three women who sat close to the "*Chef muet.*" Foremost, her livid face set in cold complacency that was deadly malicious satisfaction, was the Queen Mother, the "fat-faced Florentine who battened on the miseries of France," the willing instrument of the Guises, who were the evil genii of Southern Europe until the last of the vile brood yielded up his misspent life under the assassin's knife. A vulgar virago in private life, a plotting, unscrupulous politician and a vindictive enemy in public affairs, she has not left the record of a single redeeming trait or action. "The niece of a pope; mother of four Valois; a Queen of France, an Italian Catholic—above all, a Medici"—no woman of any age

ever had equal opportunities for working evil or doing good. She had had few prouder moments in her long life than this.

The story goes that she would have her daughter-in-law stand, and not sit, while the execution and the scenes preceding it went on. And when the girl-wife shuddered and put her hands before her eyes, she was berated in the hearing of all about her for sympathy with those who had conspired to murder her husband.

"Have you, then, no loyalty to him and to France? And no shame, that you show cowardice before your subjects?"

She had the tongue of an Italian beldame, however imperial might be her state, and Marie Stuart did not hear her tirades for the first time.

The youthful sovereign was in the prime of her girlish bloom. Yet we read that her undeniable beauty was the least of her charms.

"Showing an astonishing acquaintance

with books, affairs and men," says one biographer, "well versed in politics at ten, and mistress of the French Court at fifteen. In this wonder which the Guises brought to France, every human gift was united save self-control and tact. Fantastic and visionary, for all her keenness in intrigue, for all her seeming cunning and finesse, she ended by falling into every snare her enemies set for her."

Balzac calls her "the most intimate enemy of Catherine de' Medici. A little blonde, malicious as a soubrette; haughty as a Stuart who wore three crowns; learned as an old savant; kittenish as a convent school-girl; enamoured of her husband as a courtesan of her lover; devoted to the uncles whom she admired."

In that last clause may be wrapped up the fell secret of the wreck of a life that had such rare and brilliant promise, such capabilities of benefit to her country and her kind. For her uncles, who brought her from her mother's arms to be

educated in France, were Cardinal Lorraine and the Duc de Guise, usually coupled in infamous immortality as "the Guises." They had mastered Catherine. Marie Stuart "admired" and was "devoted" to them. One of them was at her elbow now, and if he did not join in the sharp admonition of her mother-in-law, he said nothing to soften it.

The third woman of the regal group was Anne d' Este, wife of the Duc François de Guise. She was the only one of the trio whose verbal protest against the wholesale executions has come down to us. She was not afraid of the audacious *bourgeoise* Florentine whom she detested, and she turned upon her fiercely when the latter, seeing the tears the duchess could not control, reproved her coarsely for the weakness.

"This is a piteous sight!" she cried through her sobs. "And some great misfortune will surely fall upon our house in vengeance for it!"

Her husband swore at her as roundly

as he might at a stable-boy, and bade her hold her tongue.

It was his hand that had given the signal for the bloody work to begin, at the moment of the exchange of salutations between Condé and the condemned Huguenot gentlemen. They had begun the second verse of the Psalm, and it did not falter when the name of the first victim—the Baron de Raunay—was called, and he mounted the low scaffold where the headsman stood ready. The official worked fast and steadily, but the Psalm went on with decreasing volume until the last man was named—the gallant Baron de Castelnau. His brother had died to save the life of the King's uncle years before.

Princes have short memories, and we know what was the motto of the House of Lorraine concerning kings' promises. Yet we cannot but hope that it was a remorseful, if a hazy memory, that turned the immature monarch pale and sick, and caused his convulsive gesture when

De Castelnau—"with the words of the old Psalm upon his lips"—stepped upon the scaffold.

"It was too late; the Cardinal had made the fatal sign, and the last head fell with the rest.

"The very headsman wearied of his task, and the axe's edge was dull and blunted."

The *Chef muet* had broken silence before this, and his protest must have rung down to the dauntless victims awaiting their turn.

"What an easy task"—he cried aloud to the Guises—"for foreigners to seize on France after the death of so many honourable men!"

The words carried a sting Catherine and the Guises never forgot or forgave.

The execution of the nobles took place directly after breakfast.

"The Court had left the dining-hall and were all led out—men, women, and children—by the Duke of Guise, to witness this execution."

Later in the day, certain notable prisoners were hung from the railing over which we lean to see where, as the guide points out to us, hundreds of others of lower birth were flung down from the corner tower and thrown into the Loire, that, by evening, was blocked with corpses.

We hear too, with positive physical nausea, how a man, who had contrived to escape pursuit until then, was haled into the breakfast-room of the Guises next morning, summarily hung from the window-bars, and stabbed to hasten the business.

Three days later, Catherine, still unsated with blood, condescended to listen to the pleadings of "the softer spirits of her Court," and left the shambles for the purer air of the beautiful chateau of Chenonçeaux, where the revels were resumed that had been interrupted by the rumoured insurrection.

We are not ashamed of the recoil from the blood-red rust of the iron bars of the long balcony. It looks horribly realistic

THE ASSASSINATION OF THE DUKE OF GUISE

From the engraving by Sartain after the painting by Dalaroche

when one thinks what hung there, and swung slowly in the evening breeze from the polluted river, on that black and shameful day in the history of the sixteenth century. It was but the prologue to the vaster Massacre of St. Bartholomew, but the attendant circumstances mark it with a more sanguinary cross for us.

We recount to one another in the lower court-yard, where the ivy grows lush and darkly green, with red veins streaking the leaves, as we glean the rest of the tale from book and memory—that Anne d' Este's husband, who upbraided her tears, died by the assassin's hand, and that her son was the third Duc de Guise, the thorn in the side of Henry Third (Catherine's youngest son), of whose tragic taking-off we heard in the chateau of Blois. Also, that his brother of Lorraine was murdered in the same place forty-eight hours before the insolent Duke walked to his death in the King's bedchamber.

We turn the leaves of our best guide-

book to read, without a touch of compassion for Catherine:

"Her tricks and schemes are over; she is found out at last, and dies beneath the rooms where Guise was stabbed to death. Her body, which found but scant and hasty burial, was left almost forgotten, and hurried to its tomb from the church of St. Sauveur."

Without speaking of it, I know that, in the mind of each of us, there lingers —as we take a last look at the noble façade, recurring once and again to the balcony that juts, intact, from the riverward wall, and during our dreamy flight through the purpling twilight to our resting-place for the night—the picture of the figure and face of the fairest ornament of the French Court, as she cowered under the gibes of her mother-in-law, and dared not reprobate the crime of the uncle to whom she was "devoted."

At the end of a long mile the Irrepressible breaks the silence:

"And *she* died on the scaffold! Poor Mary!"

Cool-headed historians have dispelled for us much of the glamour that once veiled from pitying eyes Mary Stuart's manifold faults, and what we must now know as her vices. The mingling of the Stuart and the Lorraine blood could not but be fatal to the growth of honesty and truth. Our judgment of her was never more lenient than when we set her for ourselves in the forefront of the red-rusted balcony. The shivering mannikin no crown could ever make a king, was at her side, whimpering under his breath lamentations "at the punishment of so many of my poor subjects," and behind and at her other hand were the incarnate fiend, her mother-in-law, and the brothers of the mother who never ceased to instruct her, by word and letter, to "revere and obey her uncles of Lorraine and Guise in all things, both temporal and spiritual."

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